

Germany confirms holding Iranian

BONN (R) — German authorities confirmed on Friday that they had detained an Iranian at Bonn's request in connection with the murder of an exiled Iranian minister in a Paris suburb this week. A spokesman for the state prosecutor's office in Cologne said the man, president in the Bonn area, had been detained for questioning late on Thursday on the basis of an international warrant, and was now in temporary custody. He declined to name the man but confirmed he was being held in connection with the killing of Reza Mazlouman, a vice-minister of education under the late Shah before the 1979 Islamic revolution. As an extradition case, the matter is being handled by a higher regional court in Cologne rather than a local Bonn court.

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Netanyahu comes from behind to win nail-biting Israeli election drama

Likud leader snatches premiership from Peres with a slim majority, says he is committed to peace process
Labour and Likud suffer loss in Knesset elections

Combined agency dispatches

RIGHT-WING leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who rode to power on a wave of anger over Palestinian suicide bombings, was declared the winner Friday in a come-from-behind election victory over Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

In a nail-biting finale, Mr. Netanyahu won 50.4 per cent of the votes compared with 49.5 per cent for Mr. Peres.

Final results of Knesset election

HEREWITH IS the makeup of the new Knesset, Israel's 120-seat parliament, according to the final count of votes from Wednesday's general elections as given Friday by the central elections commission (figures in brackets are the seats held previously):

Labour Party	34	(44)
Likud and allies	32	(40)
Shas (ultra-orthodox)	10	(6)
National Religious Party	9	(6)
Meretz (left)	9	(12)
Israel B'aliya (recent immigrants)	7	(0)
Hadash (Jewish-Arab communist)	5	(3)
United Torah Judaism (ultra-orthodox)	4	(4)
United Arab List	4	(2)
Third Way (centrist)	4	(0)
Moledet (far right)	2	(3)

according to results released by the Central Election Commission.

The close results — Mr. Netanyahu won by just 29,457 votes out of nearly three million cast — underscored the deep divisions among Israelis over peace talks with the Palestinians and the Arab World.

After the announcement, the prime minister-designate prayed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, where he was cheered by thousands of supporters who chanted, "Bibi-Bibi."

Mr. Netanyahu, 46, who is not observant, defeated Mr. Peres in part because of overwhelming support from religious Israelis.

Mr. Netanyahu did not claim victory, apparently planning to wait with the announcement until the end of the Sabbath at sundown Saturday. Earlier Friday, he told supporters outside his home in the upscale Jerusalem neighbourhood of Rehavia that "the country is in good hands."

Mr. Netanyahu, the leader of the opposition Likud party, received telephone calls from Mr. Peres, U.S. President Bill Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac who wished him good luck.

Mr. Peres said he would assure an orderly transfer of power, according to Netanyahu spokesman Shai Bazak.

Mr. Netanyahu told Mr. Peres he had shared his hopes for peace and that he would do everything in his power to make them come true.

Mr. Peres' defeat will



Benjamin Netanyahu

probably mean the end of a political career that spanned five decades, including two stints as prime minister.

A Netanyahu aide, Dore Gold, said he has called Mohammad Abbas, number two in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority, and told him Israel's new prime minister was committed to the peace process.

Still, Mr. Peres and Mr. Netanyahu have conflicting

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Netanyahu calls King, who congratulates him and hopes for his success in achieving peace Premier-elect welcome to Amman summit — Ensour

Combined agency dispatches

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Friday received a phonecall from the newly elected Israeli premier, Benjamin Netanyahu.

The King and Mr. Netanyahu exchanged views about the peace process and the need to "follow the path of peace for the better of the region," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The King congratulated Mr. Netanyahu and voiced hope for his success in reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for the generations to come, Petra said.

Acting Prime Minister

Abdullah Ensour said meanwhile Mr. Netanyahu would be welcome to attend a summit next week between Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"Nothing would prevent the participation of Netanyahu at the Aqaba summit and his participation would be a positive step," Dr. Ensour told AFP.

Dr. Ensour could not confirm whether Mr. Netanyahu would participate after he was declared the winner Friday in Israeli elections over

incumbent Shimon Peres.

An exact date for the summit has not been set, but officials have indicated it would take place next week.

Dr. Ensour also said Jordan's relations with Israel will not be affected by the election defeat of Mr. Peres by Mr. Netanyahu.

"The Jordanian government dealt with Shimon Peres as a representative of the State of Israel and not in a personal capacity," said Dr. Ensour.

Party was in power.

Arab countries have expressed concern that the victory of Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the nationalist Likud party, threatens the Middle East peace process.

But Mr. Ensour said: "Mr. Netanyahu sees as satisfactory and irreversible the Jordanian-Israeli peace process," adding that the Likud leader had since visited Amman twice since 1994 for talks with Jordanian officials.

"I am convinced that bilateral relations will not be damaged in any way during Mr. Netanyahu's mandate."

Peres vows to defend peace

TEL AVIV (Agencies) —

Caretaker Prime Minister Shimon Peres vowed Friday to oppose any attempts by his right-wing successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, to derail the peace process.

"We shall oppose any attempt to stop (the peace process) because this was not a choice between political parties but a choice between two different ways and we shall remain faithful to our way," he told reporters outside his Tel Aviv home as Mr. Netanyahu's victory in prime ministerial elections was announced. "I shall continue to work for peace wherever I shall be," Mr. Peres said.

Earlier Israeli radio said Mr. Peres telephoned Mr. Netanyahu to congratulate him on his election victory and promise to do everything possible to ensure a smooth transfer of power.

Mr. Netanyahu responded that he "appreciated what Peres had done for the State of Israel over many years," the radio reported.

"We live in the same nation and we share the same ambition to achieve peace," he was quoted as saying.

Mr. Peres meanwhile ruled a quick Israeli army pullout from the volatile West Bank city of Hebron saying he would leave it up to his successor.

Mr. Peres took the decision after meeting with his top ministers at the defence ministry in Tel Aviv before the results of the final count were announced.

Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud party, is to become Israel's new prime minister after he clinched victory in general elections Wednesday.

But until he forms a new government and takes power, Mr. Peres' Labour government remains in control and can take decisions beyond the simple day-to-day running of affairs.

Under the Oslo 2 peace agreement signed between the Labour government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in September 1995, Israel was to withdraw from four-fifths of Hebron by March 28.

Mr. Peres delayed the pull-back after a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants in February and March, citing security concerns.

Mr. Netanyahu has pledged to implement the Oslo 2 agreement if elected but has not taken a public stand on the specific question of Hebron, which is complicated by the presence of some 400 militant Jewish settlers living among the 120,000 Palestinian residents of the town.

However, key figures in the Likud party and its expected allies are strongly opposed to going ahead with the withdrawal.

Jordan does not expect ties to be affected by Likud victory

By Natasha Bukhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan will continue to work with the Israeli government and is "confident" that the newly elected Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, will resume the pro-peace policy pursued by his predecessor Shimon Peres, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Friday.

"We feel that peace has become a strategic option for all parties concerned and, as such, we will continue to work with the Israeli government and we are confident that it will continue with a pro-peace policy that would

soon witness a resumption of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks according to the principles set by the Madrid process," Dr. Muasher told the Jordan Times.

Reacting to the victory Dr. Muasher said that "the Israeli public has elected its government and we have signed a peace treaty with the State of Israel and not with one party."

The minister's statement came at a time when Jordanians have sounded pessimistic that the new Likud premier will uphold the peace strategies of Mr. Peres.

However, popular disappointment and dismay over the election of Mr. Netanyahu believed to reflect

Israelis' rejection of peace with Arabs was met with official reassurances that the peace process is irreversible and, therefore, it is to the benefit of all parties concerned that the peace talks are resumed in order to reach comprehensive peace in the region.

"It is very important that the peace process reach its only logical conclusion, which is a comprehensive peace that brings prosperity to all parties," Dr. Muasher said, adding that "the model of peace provided by Jordan can only be strengthened through pushing forward negotiations on all other

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Arafat convenes emergency talks

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat called an emergency cabinet meeting on Friday to discuss the impact of the right-wing election victory in Israel amid fears it will wreck the peace process.

Arafat advisor, Nabil Abu Radwan, said the Palestinian cabinet and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive committee would meet late Friday "to discuss the latest developments."

Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the hardline Likud party, has pledged to honour the previous government's autonomy agreements with the Palestinians.

But he has refused to discuss the Palestinian dream of an independent state or the future of Jerusalem, ruled out handing back more land and has vowed to expand Jewish settlements on the West Bank — putting on a potential collision course with Palestinian leaders.

Yasser Arafat's information minister, dismissed Mr. Netanyahu's talk to peace and warned that the peace process was in grave danger.

Mr. Netanyahu's victory is

"a serious sign that the peace process will be dangerously threatened... this requires a global re-evaluation of the situation for the Palestinians and the Arabs," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

The Likud leader's policies were based on "extending the settlements and maintaining the occupation," he said, calling for an urgent Arab summit to organise a defence of peace.

Mr. Arafat had implicitly backed Israel's incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the race for prime minister and the vote for the 120-seat parliament.

The Palestinian leader came under fire Friday for not taking the right-wing threat seriously enough.

Hanan Ashrawi, a leading Palestinian legislator, said Mr. Arafat failed to clinch "fundamental issues" before Wednesday's elections in Israel.

One such issue is an Israeli army pull-out from most of the West Bank town of Hebron, which the Jewish state committed itself to in its autonomy accords with Mr. Arafat.

In Cairo, a PLO official said the victory of Mr. Arafat.

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Clinton says support for Israel unchanged

Combined agency dispatches

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton telephoned Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu Friday, congratulating him on his election victory and pledging continued U.S. support for Israel, the White House said.

"The president affirmed the continued support of the United States for the people of Israel in their quest for peace with security," the White House said in a statement.

Mr. Clinton invited Mr. Netanyahu to visit Washington soon and the newly-elected Israeli leader said he planned to accept the invitation after he forms a government, the statement said.

Mr. Clinton also "expressed his commitment to continue working together with the government of Israel and all those in the region who support peace to realise the goal of a comprehensive peace between Arabs and Israelis."

The conversation between Mr. Clinton and Mr. Netanyahu lasted around 20 minutes.

Mr. Clinton also telephoned outgoing Premier Shimon Peres and expressed his "deep personal regard and appreciation" for Mr. Peres.

The president also sent a warm message to Mr. Peres.

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Peres' leadership in the Middle East peace process and for strengthening U.S.-Israeli relations, the statement said.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali offered congratulations to Mr. Netanyahu while sending a message of "friendship" to Mr. Peres.

U.N. spokesman Sylvana Foa declined to reveal the exact wording of messages sent to the two contenders in this week's elections in Israel.

But she said the secretary general's cable to Mr. Netanyahu "is congratulating him on his electoral victory and his cable to Shimon Peres is a cable of friendship."

Diplomatic sources here said the secretary general feared for the impact of a Netanyahu victory on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

French President Jacques Chirac addressed "a friendly salute" to Mr. Netanyahu, saying he had no doubt about his determination to continue peace process.

"I hope that the new majority in Israel will pursue the peace process, and I have no doubt that it will," Mr. Chirac told a press conference, ending a two-day visit to the western region of Brittany.

The president also sent a warm message to Mr. Peres.

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Israeli jets raid Hizbollah after four killed

BAALBEK (Agencies) — Israel retaliated Friday for the killing of four soldiers in a South Lebanon guerrilla ambush with an air strike that blasted a Hizbollah arms dump near the Syrian border.

Three civilians were lightly wounded in the pre-dawn raid on this guerrilla stronghold in the Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon, security sources reported.

Five fighter-bombers fired at least two hits and igniting fires at the depot in the suburban Kayyali neighbourhood, the sources said.

An Israeli army communiqué said the raiding jets scored accurate hits on a "terrorist target" in the Baalbek area in response to the ambush in South Lebanon more than 12 hours earlier.

On Thursday, guerrillas

carried out an elaborate two-bomb ambush against Israeli troops in the Israeli-occupied border enclave in the south, killing four soldiers.

Seven soldiers, a militia-man of the Israeli-armed South Lebanon Army and two local journalists were wounded.

Hizbollah warned of more attacks to avenge the deaths of 102 Lebanese civilians killed in an Israeli attack on a U.N. base at Cana packed with refugees.

A statement by the group in Beirut said Thursday bombing was "the first down payment to avenge the blood of women and children killed in Cana."

we consider the blood of the martyrs of Israeli massacres a debt until we get rid of the Zionist assassins," the statement said, pledging more anti-Israeli operations.

The two bombs exploded almost simultaneously as an Israeli armoured patrol passed along a main road in Marjayoun, headquarters of the Israeli army and its client militia in the buffer strip, the army said.

Hizbollah guerrillas also fired rockets late Thursday at an army patrol on the Sojoud-Rihane road in the central area of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, but there were no casualties, Lebanese police said.

Under the Oslo 2 peace agreement signed between the Labour government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in September 1995, Israel was to withdraw from four-fifths of Hebron by March 28.

Mr. Peres delayed the pull-back after a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants in February and March, citing security concerns.

Mr. Netanyahu has pledged to implement the Oslo 2 agreement if elected but has not taken a public stand on the specific question of Hebron, which is complicated by the presence of some 400 militant Jewish settlers living among the 120,000 Palestinian residents of the town.

However, key figures in the Likud party and its expected allies are strongly opposed to going ahead with the withdrawal.

Israel eases W. Bank-Gaza closure

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian workers trickled back to their jobs in Israel on Friday after Israel eased a closure clamped on the West Bank and Gaza Strip before Wednesday's national elections. The army said late on Thursday that Palestinian workers aged 40 and up would be allowed to enter Israel according to work permits given before the elections. Export of goods and truck traffic from Gaza to Israel would also be allowed. "Only 700 workers left Gaza to return to their jobs in Israel on Friday and 42 trucks have crossed Erez border crossing into Israel with Israeli army escorts," a Palestinian security officer at Erez said. Freij Al Khairy, head of the Palestinian civil coordination committee, said the 7,500 workers who had been allowed to enter Israel to work before the closure were permitted to return to their jobs. He said Gaza Strip residents were allowed to travel to the West Bank with proper permits, and trade between self-ruled areas and Israel had resumed. "The situation has returned to what it was before the February and March suicide bombings," he told Reuters.

Shalikashvili ends visit, praising ties and hinting at more U.S. military aid

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, ended a one-day visit to Jordan on Friday after praising Jordanian-American military cooperation as a deeply satisfying and hinting that his country would give more military assistance to the Kingdom.

Gen. Shalikashvili, the top American military officer and closer advisor to President Bill Clinton, also described the recent deployment of a U.S. Air Force unit in Jordan as a great advantage to the U.S. as well as Jordan in terms of training and exercises.

The general, who was received by His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Thursday and visited the American unit deployed at Azraq air force base on Friday, said Jordanian-U.S.

military ties were "on the right track."

"Our military cooperation is really outstanding," he told a press conference shortly before he flew out.

"The purpose of my coming here was not only to renew my personal friendship and the military relationship between our two countries but also to assess how the relationship is going."

Gen. Shalikashvili said his discussions here showed that "the Middle East peace process is irreversible," and he paid tribute to Jordan for having "set a model by entering a peace agreement with Israel."

Gen. Shalikashvili, who also held extensive talks with his counterpart here, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Marei, said both sides were committed to "building on the strength of that relationship and carry the relations forward."

The U.S. Air Force unit deployed here for a two-

month period beginning April is training Jordanian pilots on F-16 fighter jets of the type Jordan is expected to receive next year. The unit also staged joint exercises with the Jordanian Royal Air Force.

Part of the unit's task while in Jordan also involves conducting surveillance flights over Iraq. Jordanian pilots are not taking part in those flights.

Gen. Shalikashvili, who did not refer to the flights over Iraq in his comments to the press, said he was "extraordinarily pleased" with the deployment.

"First of all the working relationship between the Jordan Royal Air Force and the U.S. Air Force in the context of the exercises is outstanding," he said. "When you talk to the pilots and those who maintain and support those airplanes you really have a warm feeling and ev-

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U.S. insists Libya building chemical weapons plant

WASHINGTON — The United States insisted on Thursday that Libya was intent on constructing a chemical weapons plant despite assertions by Egypt that its inspectors have found no evidence to support American claims.

"We remain sceptical that any inspection of the facility at Tarhuna, still under construction, ... could establish that it will not be used for chemical weapons purposes," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters.

"Unfortunately, we believe that the Libyan government is intent upon building a chemical weapons capability," he said.

Speaking this week with foreign journalists, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was quoted as disputing U.S. charges that Libya was building an underground factory for producing chemical arms at the Tarhuna site, 65 kilometres southeast of Tripoli.

Mr. Mubarak, in an interview with the Washington Times and the English-language Middle East Times, said Egyptian weapons experts recently explored the tunnels in the Tarhuna mountains and "there are tunnels but no installations, no equipment."

"I think the Americans know very well there is no activity now in these tunnels," he was quoted as saying.

Mr. Mubarak is considered a key ally by Washington, and his government annually receives \$2 billion in U.S. aid.

He spoke after receiving Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi on his first trip to Cairo since U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry last April showed the Egyptian leader photographs of the alleged Libyan chemical weapons plant. During his visit, Colonel Qadhafi repeated

the Libyan position that the underground site was part of an irrigation project and said the U.S. photographs were faked.

Mr. Mubarak was quoted in the interviews as saying Col. Qadhafi promised him the facility would not be fitted for equipment to produce chemical weapons.

The Clinton administration has made a major issue of the alleged chemical weapons plant.

During his trip to Egypt, Mr. Perry warned that the United States would not let Libya, which Washington considers a rogue state, begin operating the alleged facility and raised the prospect of military action.

Mr. Mubarak and his foreign minister, Amr Musa, have said they need more proof.

At the State Department on Thursday, Mr. Burns called Mr. Mubarak's assertion that there were no chemical weapons at Tarhuna understandable. "We never said there were chemical weapons at Tarhuna. We've never claimed that. It's an operational facility," the spokesman said.

"What we have said ... is that there's very good reason to believe this facility is under construction for the purpose of harbouring a chemical weapons programme. And that is the purpose of the very mysterious construction under way at Tarhuna."

Mr. Burns dismissed suggestions that Mr. Mubarak might have been fooled by Col. Qadhafi.

He praised Mr. Mubarak for sending inspectors to the site and for "sharing the very strong concerns of the United States about Libya's chemical weapon programme."

Washington has not yet been briefed on the inspection but "the Egyptians did a very good thing by shining a very large

international spotlight on this programme," he said.

"And perhaps ... Colonel Qadhafi will think twice now about trying to make this particular site operational."

And if that is the effect of the Egyptian action, then the Egyptian action will have been quite productive," Mr. Burns said.

He vowed that Washington would "continue to look very closely, using all means at our disposal, at this facility and at other spots and other locations in Libya where we believe he may intend to build a chemical weapons operational facility."

Scotsman convicted

A federal jury has convicted a Scottish national and his company on charges of having violated a decade-old U.S. embargo on trade with Libya, the U.S. attorney's office in Boston announced Thursday.

David McKeeve, 36 of Glasgow, Scotland, faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$750,000 following his conviction in a federal court in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mr. McKeeve was also found guilty of conspiracy to export \$335,000 worth of computer equipment to Libya and with having made false statements to U.S. customs officials.

McNeill International of Edinburgh, of which Mr. McKeeve is a director, faces a fine of \$500,000. Mr. McKeeve was accused of having schemed to export the computers to Libya and to have hidden their ultimate destination from U.S. authorities.

Former President Ronald Reagan in January 1986 issued an executive order banning all U.S. trade with Libya, apart from humanitarian aid, on grounds that Tripoli supported "terrorism." U.S.

warplanes in April of that year attacked Libya after Washington accused it of involvement in a bomb attack on a Berlin nightclub frequented by U.S. servicemen. The United States later charged that two Libyan agents were behind the 1988 mid-air explosion over Scotland of a U.S. airliner that killed 270 people.

"Those countries that support international terrorism, such as Libya, should not benefit from U.S. technology," declared U.S. attorney, Donald Stern. "Those who flout the law will be vigorously prosecuted." Evidence presented at trial sought to show that McKeeve had caused false information to be submitted to shipping agents and the U.S. Customs Service to the effect that the equipment was bound for Cyprus and later Ethiopia.

In fact, according to the prosecution, the destination was Libya, a fact he concealed from the Massachusetts company from which he negotiated the sale of the computers.

Mr. McKeeve left the United States after arranging the deal but returned last November when the U.S. Customs Service, which by this time had grown suspicious of his activities, lured him back to Boston.

A customs agent, posing as a seaport supervisor, told him the computers were being held up because of paperwork problems. Arriving in Boston, Mr. McKeeve went to the customs office and met with an undercover agent and, according to U.S. officials, made additional false statements on the destination of the computers. He was arrested Nov. 2 and had been held in a county house of correction until his trial.

Shalikashvili ends visit praising ties

(Continued from page 1)

everything is on the right track.

"Also, we are very fortunate here that in addition to those combined exercises, we also had the opportunity to conduct the necessary training for our air force. They go back home fully trained and fully ready and fully up in all those skills that they need to maintain," he said.

"It is certainly a great plus for the U.S. Air Force," he added. And, "from the briefings and discussions I had here, I think it has been a plus for the Jordanian air force as well."

The 16 F-16s Jordan is expected to receive next year "is a very important part" of the U.S.-Jordanian military relationship, said Gen. Shalikashvili in reply to a question on American military aid to the Kingdom.

But "it is certainly not the full extent of the cooperation between us in that it involves as well a significant draw-down of some of our equipment, ranging from tanks and helicopter," he said. "I'm quite satisfied that we have set in motion the right kind of cooperation and that it would be greatly assisted not only by the training and exercise but also by the equipment and sustainment package."

The U.S. Air Expeditionary Force deployed in Azraq



Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai (right) and his wife and other senior military officers bid farewell to General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, upon his departure from Jordan on Friday after a one-day visit (Photo by Yousef Allan)

is also helping modernise the air base there and is expected to leave behind part of its equipment that would help Jordan receive and accommodate F-16 fighter jets.

Answering a question on whether the U.S. feared an Iranian military invasion of any of the Gulf states, Gen. Shalikashvili, who visited

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain before coming to Jordan, said there was reason for concern. "It is important to remember that first and foremost Iran poses a threat to its support for state-sponsored terrorism (and) its attempts to destabilise the region," he said.

"Certainly in the long term we all need to be concerned

that they are acquiring not only a conventional capability but also capability of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

The Iranian build-up "is very bothersome," he added. "By any stretch of imagination, it is not just the defence capability but also the offensive capability. So all of us have to be concerned."

British firms lose massive Saudi contracts

London (AFP) — British engineering companies have been dropped from the bidding process for contracts worth \$2 billion with Saudi Aramco, the Saudi state oil corporation, because of Britain's failure to expel Saudi dissident Mohammed Al Massari, the Financial Times reported Friday.

The paper said it had seen leaked documents detailing Aramco's list of favoured contractors and that no British-based companies have been named among the bidders for 12 Saudi oilfield and gas plant projects.

British firms have in the past won significant con-

tracts with Aramco and several had been expected to win more business this time, the Times noted.

According to the documents passed to the daily, the six bidders on the shortlist for the largest Aramco contract — worth \$600 million — are the U.S. firms Bechtel, Foster Wheeler and Brown and Root, Japanese companies JGC and Chiyoda, and Snamprogetti of Italy.

Saudi Arabia warned the British government last month that it might pay an economic price for allowing Mr. Massari to stay in Britain for another four years.

But Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind last week told a Saudi newspaper that Riyadh had assured Britain that Mr. Massari's presence in London would not lead to discrimination against British companies.

Some of the biggest British civil engineering companies — including Davy Day and Babcock International — have already said that they lost multi-million dollar contracts because of the political tension between Britain and Saudi Arabia.

The Home Office said in April that Mr. Massari, whom London has been trying to expel under pres-

sure from the Saudi government, could stay in the country for four more years but would then be required to apply again to remain in Britain.

The decision came about six weeks after an appeal judge asked Home Secretary Michael Howard to reconsider his order to send Mr. Massari to the Caribbean island state of Dominica.

Since Mr. Massari arrived in Britain about two years ago he has become a thorn in Riyadh's side, bombarding Saudi Arabia with a blizzard of faxed tracts condemning the government's human rights record.

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Minoan palace falling to bits, Greek archaeologists warn

ATHENS (AFP) — The Minoan Palace of Knossos in Crete will become "a pile of rubble" unless restoration work is carried out as a matter of urgency, Greek Archaeologists warned Thursday.

"Fifteen years have gone by since the first inspections and nothing has been done. The deterioration of the ancient building materials is accelerating and according to experts is irreversible," archaeologists and workers at the Knossos site said in a statement quoted by the Greek news agency ANA.

In a few years, "there will no longer be a Minoan palace in Knossos to show to Greek and

foreign visitors. All there will be left to show is a pile of rubble," the statement said.

The palace of Knossos, five kilometres (three miles) from Heraklion dates from between 1700 and 1400 BC. It was unearthed thanks to research by the German Archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann who also found the sites of Troy and Mycenae mentioned by Homer. British Archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans began working to restore the palace at Knossos in 1900.

Meanwhile an exhibition opened in the Athens museum of the so-called "nightingales" treasure consisting of priceless

artefacts looted from Mycenaean-age tombs in the Peloponnese and recently recovered in the United States after a lengthy legal battle. It consists of 312 items including bracelets, necklaces, gold rings studded with semi-precious stones and a large number of seals and antique coins.

The collection is named after the village of Aidonia where the items were stolen, which in Greek means "nightingales".

More than 500 other items from Aidonia and also from the Mycenae collection found in the last century by Schliemann are also on show.

U.S. watching Sudan for end of support for extremists

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The U.S. is "watching carefully" for signs that U.N.-sanctioned Sudan is ending support for terrorism after reports that it deported a Saudi financier of Muslim militants, the embassy here said Thursday.

"The U.S. will be watching carefully for signs that Sudan will follow through with verifiable measures to demonstrate to the world its stated opposition to terrorism," the U.S. embassy in Khartoum said in a statement received by AFP.

"Now is the time for Sudan to take action," it said.

It said Washington "has responded to recent public statements by senior Sudanese officials to the

effect that terrorist elements and Osama Ben Laden, a leading financier of terrorism have left Sudan and presumably will not be permitted to return to resume "activities."

The Arabic daily Al-Hayat reported in last week that Ben Laden, a businessman who lost his Saudi citizenship in 1994, had left Sudan and had settled in Afghanistan territory under control of the Taliban militia.

Mr. Ben Laden, an opponent to the Saudi royal family, had lived in Khartoum since 1992 where he reportedly financed activities of Algerian, Libyan, Iranian and Saudi Islamic extremist groups.

The United Nations

slapped diplomatic sanctions on Sudan in May and has warned it will intensify them if Khartoum does not stop "supporting terrorism" and fails to extradite three fugitive Muslim militants to Ethiopia.

The embassy also said it "views with interest" calls by Sudanese President Omar Al-Beshir for improved relations with the United States and for an end to the 12-year civil war in the south of the country.

The U.S. pulled its diplomats out of Khartoum in late January after the U.N. issued its first condemnation of Sudanese support for terrorism. Its embassy to Sudan now works out of Nairobi.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO

- 15:00 Moomin
- 15:30 Moomin
- 16:00 Blue Heelers
- 16:40 Big Brother Jake
- 17:15 La Vie Devant Moi
- 17:30 Que Le Meilleur Gagne
- 18:00 Serie - Chateau Valon
- 19:00 Le Journal
- 19:15 Magazine - Fast Pas Rever
- 19:35 Comedy - Ellen
- 20:00 The Discovery of the 7th Continent
- 20:30 Miami Vice
- 21:00 Earth Assignment
- 21:30 Prim
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
- 23:10 Feature film: "Softie"

PRAYER TIMES

- 05:53 Fajr
- 12:33 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
- 16:14 Asr
- 19:40 Maghreb
- 21:13 Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swifish, Tel. 810740
- Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
- Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 623366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772621

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624325

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 645457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Moderate weather conditions will prevail during the day becoming cool at night with winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 13 / 24

Aqaba 20 / 32

Desert 11 / 27

Jordan Valley 18 / 31

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 26, Aqaba 35 Humidity

readings: Amman 51 per cent,

Aqaba 37 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

- AMMAN: Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 736011
- Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
- Dr. Khalid Al-Jarrah 666873
- Dr. Jihad Samour 760181
- Firas pharmacy 661912
- Ferdows pharmacy 778336
- Al Asma pharmacy 670255
- Natrouch pharmacy 623672
- Al Salam pharmacy 636730
- Yacoub pharmacy 649445
- Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
- Rhadi pharmacy 847632

IRRID: Dr. Mazen Abu Bakr 676852

Aqaba pharmacy (—)

ZARQA: Dr. Walid Al Akhras 925743

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 894390

Public Security Department 63021

Hotel Complaints 603800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010239

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdall Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 775111

Radio Jordan 775111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636281

RJ Flight Information 06-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6

Akheh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malheh, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 843845

Al-Mushtak Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdall 666127/77

Al-Ahli, Abdall 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mudajress 771101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/3

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602402/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital 1506

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)900560

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909090

IBRAHIM: Prince Basmal Hospital (02)725335

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275

Jin Al Nafes Hospital (02)741111

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

16:30 Damascus (RJ)

16:30 New Delhi (RJ)

16:30 Hayat, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

16:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

16:30 Beirut (RJ)

16:30 Colombo (RJ)

16:30 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Anti-smoking group marks 'no-smoking day'

AMMAN (J.T.)—The Jordanian Anti-Smoking Society marks World Non-Smoking Day today and this year is raising "Sports and Art without Tobacco" as its slogan, according to Dr. Zuhair Malhas the society's president.

Addressing a press conference on the eve of the international event, Dr. Malhas said that the society has organised a series of activities including sports events at the Al Hussein Youth City with sports teams, comedians Hisham and Nabil, martial arts clubs and the Jordanian Armed Forces Brass Bands taking part.

Urging the public to quit smoking, Dr. Malhas said

33 types of cancer are directly or indirectly related to the effects of smoking. He further warned that the incubation period for cancer is 10 years.

The number of tobacco smokers around the world is estimated at 1,200 million, according to Dr. Malhas who noted that in the advanced countries the number of adult smokers has dropped from 50 to 25 per cent. He added that the numbers of people quitting smoking are on the increase compared with smokers in the third world who account for 50 per cent of the population.

Jordan is among the first countries to pass a law

against smoking in public places such as movie theatres, libraries and on public transportation. The 1977 law calls for fines ranging from JD 10 to JD 200 or prison sentences of from one week to 12 months, said Dr. Malhas.

Walid Nazal, the society's secretary, told the press conference that the society, created in 1981, campaigns against all kinds of smoking and seeks to protect non-smokers from the dangers of smoke.

He said the society cooperates with government and private institutions to help eradicate smoking and enforce the 1977 law on preserving public health.

Planning ministry considers decentralisation plan — official

AMMAN (Petra) — Looking at upgrading the efficiency of government staff and facilitating procedures and work, the Ministry of Planning is considering an integrated programme of decentralisation at the national level, according to Khalid Tarawneh, director of the Regional Planning Department at the ministry.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Mr. Tarawneh said the programme was the subject of thorough discussion at meetings, which concluded Friday.

The discussions focused on local administration and the future of decentralisation in Jordan.

The U.N. team and their

Jordanian counterpart also discussed the basic elements needed to draw up a long-term decentralisation programme, including the legal, administrative, and financial aspects, Mr. Tarawneh said.

He said Jordan has gone a long way in applying decentralisation.

Mr. Tarawneh added that the Regional Planning Department has undertaken several field studies and surveys aimed at assessing the current situation, exploring future aspirations and defining problems that might hamper the smooth application of decentralisation at the governorate levels.

He said the U.N. team

had participated in 1994 in a workshop on future of decentralisation in Jordan and recommended that a national integrated programme on decentralisation be launched.

The team also pledged support for the programme, Mr. Tarawneh added.

He said a group of experts will meet at the department to prepare for a workshop on the programme.

The workshop will discuss research papers and will make practical recommendations which will be presented to decision makers to help enact the legislation needed to launch the programme.

3-day cancer hot-line service opens

AMMAN (PETRA) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), in cooperation with Al Shifa' a Centre, has installed a cancer hot-line for information on prevention, early detection and treatment. Starting today and for three consecutive days, the hot-line will be open to callers. The number is 831918. The GUVS also opened a clinic offering free consultation on early detection of breast cancer, prostate cancer. The services mark International Cancer Nursing Day.

Team heads for Habitat conference in Istanbul

Jordan to present example of prize-winning housing development project

AMMAN (J.T.) — The second World Habitat Conference opens Monday in Istanbul, and Jordan will submit two papers featuring the Kingdom's experiments in housing projects in the past years.

Director General of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Youssef Hiyasar arrived in Istanbul Friday and said prior to his departure from Amman that the examples of projects to be illustrated will be the 1980s development of a district east of Wadhat which won the Aga Khan Architecture Award for 1992, and a HUDD plan to restructure the housing sector in the Kingdom.

The June 3-14 meeting was expected to review and endorse a declaration of principles and tackle other important issues and examine habitat programmes of

the last 20 years and proposals for the future.

The conference will discuss two subjects namely, "Permanent Development of Human Settlements in a World with Civilised Orientations" and "Providing a Suitable Habitat to Everybody."

It convenes to tackle problems caused by sustained increase in population in cities and urban areas such as poverty, scarcity of potable water, lack of sanitary utilities, overcrowding, lack of funds to cover basic services, lack of suitable housing, and low-standard of infrastructure.

The conference is expected to urge governments to launch joint ventures with residents of urban areas to improve cities administration and consequently pave the way for creative solutions.



Youssef Hiyasar

This conference is also expected to discuss the recommendations to be issued by the Preparatory International Forum which will convene in Istanbul during the period May 31-June 1, 1996 under the headline: "Science and Technology and the Future of Cities: An International

Forum."

On the Arab level, Mr. Hiyasar said, four meetings were held to prepare for the Istanbul conference. They resulted in an Arab declaration on habitat which will be submitted to the conference in Istanbul.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements issued a statement on the eve of the Istanbul conference noting that Habitat II will focus on ways and means of making the world's cities, towns, villages and homes more livable and sustainable.

The conference, it added, will provide an opportunity to learn from the best practices applied in all parts of the world, noting that almost half of the world's population live in cities and by the year 2025 more than two-thirds of the people on earth will reside in cities. Because cities are the

fastest growing areas, their problems will also multiply, it said. If governed well, cities can surmount challenges and maximise the quality of urban living, the statement said.

The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) will also participate in the United Nations conference.

Director of the RSS Building Research Centre Seyfuddin Mu'az will represent RSS.

Dr. Mu'az will present to the conference a detailed report on RSS role in finding radical solutions to problems of urban societies by manipulating science and technology in Jordan and the prospects of using both to attain the conference objectives.

Scholars to review educational systems in Islam, Christianity

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (AL Abayt Foundation) Monday will begin a six-day Islamic-Christian seminar under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan at which 50 scholars and intellectuals from both faiths will participate, according to an announcement Friday by foundation president Nassereddin Al Assad.

Organised at the Regency Palace Hotel in cooperation with the Orthodox Centre in Switzerland, the seminar is expected to review three research papers reflecting Islamic principles and others dealing with Christian views on the theme of the seminar: "Educational systems in Islam and Christianity," according to Dr. Assad.

He said 25 scholars and intellectuals from each side will review the six papers prepared by prominent Mus-

lim and Christian scholars from Switzerland, Greece, the United States, Germany, Bosnia, Lebanon, Iraq, Senegal and Jordan.

Since 1984 the foundation has been involved in organising Muslim-Christian meetings in cooperation with prestigious world organisations in Europe and the Vatican with the purpose of promoting Islamic-Christian understanding and building bridges of confidence among the followers of the two faiths, said Dr. Assad.

He said the world has become a small village through the advances in science and technology, and it would be difficult for a country to live in isolation from regional and international political, social and religious developments.

Brother gets one year for murder of 2 sisters

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court Thursday sentenced a 38-year-old Zarqa man to one year in prison for the double murder of his two sisters on Dec. 29, 1995.

In announcing its verdict, the tribunal said the defendant, Mohammad Ahmad, benefited from a reduction in penalty because he committed the crimes in a "fit of fury" and because he killed his two sisters, Kifaya, 23, and Nadia, 32, to "cleanse his family's honour."

The family of the defendant dropped charges against their son, said the court.

According to the prosecution, Ahmad said he killed his sisters after finding a strange man in their house. "Ahmad knocked at the

door of his sisters house, but it took them (the sisters) a long time to open the door so he became suspicious, entered and searched the house and found a stranger inside," the court said quoting the prosecution.

Ahmad told police that the strange man pushed him aside and ran from the apartment, the court said, adding that Ahmad went after the man but could not catch up with him.

When Ahmad returned to the apartment, the court said, Kifaya told her brother that "this man is not mine."

Ahmad drew a gun he was carrying, shot his sister Nadia in the head and chest, according to the prosecution.

Meanwhile, Kifaya started running towards the window screaming "my brother killed my sister and he wants to kill me." She

smashed the window glass and jumped out, falling through the awning of a shop below the busy vegetable market in Zarqa.

Ahmad appeared from the window, fired five bullets at his sister. One struck her in the head, causing her instant death. Kifaya's sister Nadia died on the way to the hospital.

The court said that Ahmad, who pleaded not guilty, first fled the scene, but surrendered to police the following day.

The court said it relied on Ahmad's testimony and the testimony of a neighbour who told the authorities that he overheard the argument between Ahmad and his two sisters, then said he heard the footsteps of a man descending the stairs.

Serbs resume 'ethnic cleansing'

(Continued from page 12)

there may be no other option.

The West realises that Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic has no intention of delivering either of the two men for trial. It would harm him domestically, since Mr. Kardic and Gen. Mladic enjoy popular support — especially Gen. Mladic.

The alternative is that NATO troops in Bosnia could seize them. The peace forces has a mandate to detain alleged war criminals if they come across them, but not to hunt them down.

Diplomats say the 16-nation alliance is unlikely to make that mandate tougher because of the risks involved.

Croat pleads guilty

In the Hague, a Croat who served in the Bosnian Serb army pleaded guilty on Friday to taking part in the mass killing of Muslim men after the fall of the U.N. protected "safe area" of Srebrenica to the Bosnian Serbs in July 1995.

Drazen Erdemovic, 24, fought back tears as he admitted his participation in the summary execution of hundreds of unarmed Muslim men who had already surrendered to the Bosnian Serbs.

"I have told my counsel that I plead guilty," he told the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague.

The indictment against Mr. Erdemovic charges that the Bosnian Serbs took busloads of Muslim men to a farm near the town of Zvornik where they were shot.

"The men disembarked in groups of about 10 and were taken by members of the Bosnian Serb army to a field adjacent to the farm buildings. There they were lined up in rows and summarily executed," tribunal registrar Dominique Morro said.

Erdemovic, one of a handful of non-Serbs in the Bosnian Serb army, was arrested in Serbia and transferred to the tribunal in March after confessing his role in the Srebrenica killings in interviews with Western media.

'School 2000' — Education and Environment A play for, by and about children

By Sally Bland
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Concern for educational change and environmental protection are the overriding themes of the play "School 2000," which is to be performed, in Arabic, at the Royal Cultural Centre from June 3rd to 6th at 6 p.m. These showings are part of a package of activities throughout the Kingdom sponsored by the Jordan Environment Society (JES), to mark International Environment Day.

Vesna Masharaga, who wrote and directed "School 2000," sees education and environment as two basic issues in our lives with vast implications for the future. "My experience working in schools taught me that children are not happy there," she says in explaining why she wrote the play. "This convinced me of the need for revolutionary change in education. I hope someday educators will treat children as self-motivated learners, and create a kind of educational system where they will have a chance to learn — driven by their natural interests — without outside pressure."

The link between education and caring for the environment already exists, Ms. Masharaga believes: "Environment is a hot issue. There is already awareness in schools about this, and it will become more and more dominant in educational programmes. It will be part of our lives and education in the future," she predicts. Originally performed in April as part of the Artists

League's International Theatre Day programme, "School 2000" is a fluid blend of fact and fiction. Though conceived as a children's play, the themes and quality of the performance make the play appealing for all ages, since moving mix of realistic dialogue, interspersed with imaginative music, dance and sets.

"School 2000" opens with a semi-realistic scene: A class is taken out in the woods to learn by exploration, in line with the new school director's plans for modernising educational methods. Science fiction enters the story as the children, though hindered by a hesitant, traditional-bound teacher, stumble onto the key to learning for the future when they meet Titi — a futuristic human being and a student at "School 2000." With the help of this school's laser theatre, they travel back in time for encounters with the ancient Egyptian, Nabatean, Zulu and Andalusian civilisations. They are also projected into the future to experience first-hand what contemporary civilisation's environmental abuse holds in store for future generations.

Do we learn by being told, or through experience and active involvement? Does learning stop when we leave the school building? How can humanity survive the destruction that is now being inflicted on the environment? — These are some of the questions posed by "School 2000."

Perhaps most interesting is that "School 2000" came about by practising what it



A scene from "School 2000"

preaches. The 10-person cast, six of whom are under 16 years of age, actively participated in developing the scenario written by Ms. Masharaga, based on the idea of learning by involvement. In particular, they discussed with the director what parts of ancient history they wanted to explore, and ancient Egypt was among the first travel targets they were attracted to. "I chose Egypt because I love the Pharaohs," says Reem, who plays one of the

students in the play. "They were strange and had lots of secrets we don't know about until now; they had great knowledge of medicine. We studied ancient Egypt in history at school, but they didn't tell us about these things. I learned more from books I have at home."

Outer space was also seen as attractive. "Space is a different world than ours," says Ola, another young member of the cast. "If you just watch the sky, you

want to go there. I don't like reading about space — I'd like to live there," she concludes.

"The play takes the children's dreams into consideration," says Ms. Masharaga in explaining how changes were made in her original script. "That's why they are so emotionally involved. It's from them."

The children in the cast acknowledge that some things in "School 2000" are

more dreams than realistic possibilities, but they insist that such a school would be preferable to present-day ones, because they would have more freedom to learn. "In school 2000, you can choose whether to study or do something else if you want. You end up studying, but in a different way," says one of the young actresses. "Maybe the school is a little imaginary, but love and sharing may happen. Like did in School 2000. If all try our best."

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

*Concert by British Music Group "Battlefield Band" at Philadelphia Hotel at 8:00 p.m. (another performance will also be held on Sunday at 8:00 p.m.).

LECTURE

*"The Environmental, Nutritional, and Industrial Benefits of Olive Trees" by Mohammad Alawneh at Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Paintings by artist Issam Tantawi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until June 14. Also display of jewellery crafted by artists Suad Raja and Zina Hamadi, until June 10.

*Photography exhibition by Youssef Al 'Allan at Zatomeh University, until June 5.

*Works by Ahmad Nawash at the Jordan Plastic Arts Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 29 (Tel. 623297).

Dozens of pro-democracy activists released in Burma

RANGOON (R) — Burma's pro-democracy movement said Friday military rulers have freed dozens of the more than 260 anti-government activists they detained in a crackdown last week.

But the authorities showed no let-up in a propaganda drive against political opponents.

"They have been released, about 54 so far, but we are expecting more," said an official of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

He said the released activists were expected to gather at Ms. Suu Kyi's house.

Radio Rangoon said that the authorities had "have sent back those who were temporarily called in for questioning to their respective residences." It did not elaborate.

Last week the military government detained about 261 pro-democracy politicians ahead of a three-day congress of NLD members, which ended Tuesday.

The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) said it had not arrested the NLD members, but only detained them for questioning temporarily in an effort to prevent anarchy or unrest that might result from the meeting.

Most of those arrested were representatives who won seats in a 1990 election which the NLD won by a landslide. But the SLORC, which took power after crushing 1988 pro-democracy uprisings, did not recognise the result of the poll.

The NLD defied the arrests and verbal intimidation by the SLORC and held the party congress anyway. But since most of the elected representatives who were to attend had been arrested, the meeting became one of a series of NLD conferences to plan party strategy.

Earlier this week, Ms. Suu Kyi said at least nine of the detained politicians had been charged under emergency laws. Another source said Thursday Ms. Suu Kyi's personal assistant Win Htein had been charged and was at Insein Prison.

No information was available on the fate of those people or whether they were among those released. Official media Friday reported fresh government-staged mass rallies across the country, which they said were attended by tens of thousands of people supporting the government and denouncing the pro-democracy camp.

The government said a total of 119,000 people gathered at rallies in Mandalay and outside Rangoon

Thursday.

Diplomats say the military forces people to attend the rallies which have been staged since Tuesday when the NLD conference ended.

Speakers have attacked the democracy movement and derided its foreign influence, describing its members as "minions of colonial masters."

Lu Ni, Mandalay Institute of Education rector, told a rally said to have been attended by 42,000: "The aliens' lackeys with a negative and destructive outlook are criticising everything with pessimism and inciting riots."

The government also continued written attacks on foreign journalists in state-run newspapers, saying Western media was ignoring developments in the country and only reporting "lies" abroad.

It also said the West, which has condemned human rights abuses and forced labour practices in Burma, was hypocritical.

"The West is accusing that people are being forced to work... Had they forgotten that poor Chinese people were brought to San Francisco... and forced to work as slaves in building a railroad during the time the United States was being established?" it asked.

Regional parties keep India's premier-designate guessing

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister-designate H.D. Deve Gowda struggled Friday to assemble a centre-left government from his disparate United Front (UF) alliance, politicians said.

"There are some problems," a senior regional party leader who did not wish to be identified told reporters in the Indian capital on the day before the new government was to be sworn in.

Regional parties form the core of the 13-member alliance but Mr. Deve Gowda must also balance the interest of Socialists, Communists, pro-farmer groups and free-market advocates.

"We will meet again and will finalise it in the evening," said G.K. Moopanar, leader of Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), a powerful party in southern Tamil Nadu state.

"All the parties will take a collective stand," President Shankar Dayal Sharma asked the UF leader Tuesday to form a government after Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee resigned ahead of a confidence vote his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) looked certain to lose.

Mr. Deve Gowda has to prove his majority in parliament by June 12, but is likely to do by June 6, the Press Trust of India said.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party with 194 seats after inconclusive general elections earlier this month.

But it is outnumbered in parliament by the Congress Party and the UF, which together control 326 lawmakers. The two groups, bitter enemies on the campaign trail, forged ties this month with the common aim of thwarting the BJP's bid for power.

The leaders of the regional parties were meeting to decide on their participation in the Deve Gowda government, which was due to be sworn in by Mr. Sharma Saturday at 12.30 p.m. (0700 GMT).

The regional leaders failed to reach any conclusion at the end of a two-hour meeting. They were to meet later in the day to take a final decision.

Some of the regional leaders felt that the United Front government would not last long and did not wish to be part of it, political analysts said.

Others believed the coalition government should be represented by a majority of UF members.

Politicians also said differences over the composition of the cabinet had pushed aside debate on what policies the new government should adopt.

The United Front has set up a steering committee to draft a common economic and political programme which would be acceptable to all of the alliance's partners.

"There are some problems within the steering committee of the United Front," a senior front leader who asked not to be identified said.

Many investment decisions are being taken by India's 26 states, which have cut red tape and ushered in reforms to woo investors.

The leftists, who have been asked by Mr. Deve Gowda to draft the common programme, are opposed to foreign investment and privatisation of state-owned units.

His United Front has 190 deputies in the lower house of the parliament. Former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party, which has 136 members, has pledged to support the United Front.

Congress, whose support is crucial to the survival of the coalition government, is keen to see Mr. Deve Gowda continue with Mr. Rao's liberal economic policies.

In 1991, Mr. Rao launched sweeping economic reforms, dismantling socialist controls over industry and liberalising trade.

Andrew, Fergie end marriage

LONDON (R) — Prince Andrew's turbulent 10-year marriage to the Duchess of York ended in a London divorce court Thursday, dealing the latest blow to a monarchy tainted by scandal and rocked by marital breakups.

Queen Elizabeth's second son parted from his flame-haired wife by mutual consent as they had been separated for two years.

The speedy court settlement under Britain's "quickie divorce" system was a mere formality.

There was no court hearing, just a joint statement from their lawyers to dissolve the marriage that was celebrated amid great pomp and ceremony at Westminster Abbey in 1986.

The House of Windsor's popularity has plummeted over the antics of the young royals. Tabloids cover the saga like a soap opera about Britain's most famous dysfunctional family.

Prince Andrew's elder brother, heir to the throne Prince Charles, is currently locked in bitter divorce negotiations with his estranged wife Princess Diana.

The former Sarah Ferguson, known to millions as Fergie, has pledged to turn "a fresh clean page" after blotting her royal copybook with a free-spirited lifestyle that is said to have left her heavily in debt.

The duchess, whose fairytale wedding was hailed by thousands of Britons, now faces life outside the charmed royal circle.

She plans to work hard for charity and devote herself to her children. As a single working mother, she has pledged to remain "the bestest of friends" with her helicopter pilot husband.

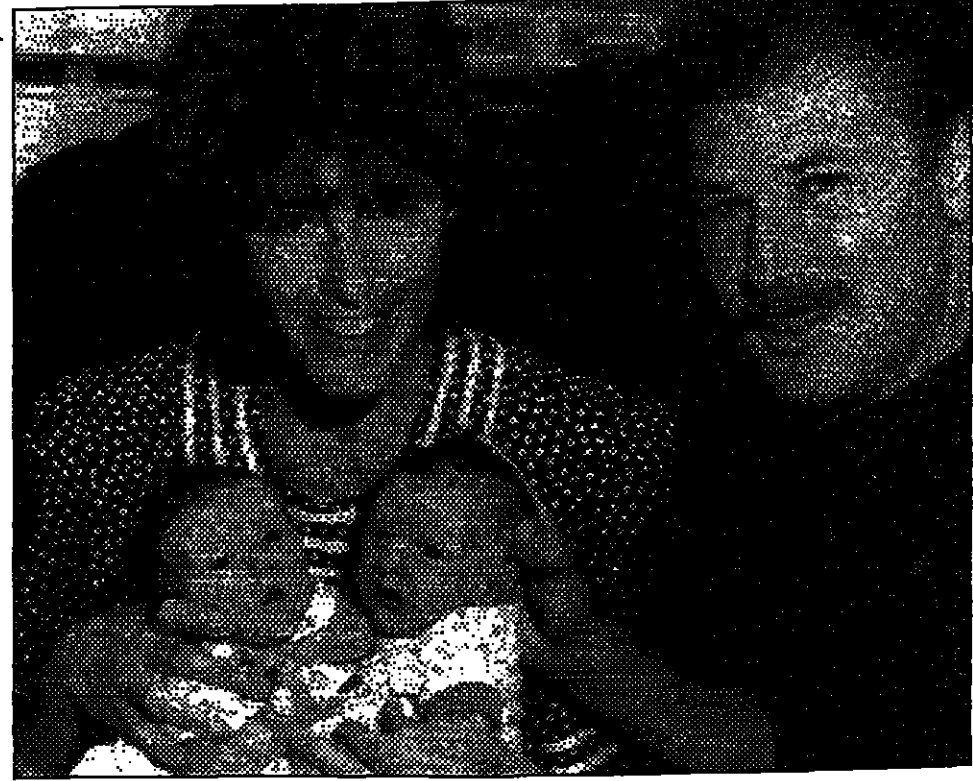
"I think it's a fresh clean page. I think I go onwards and upwards. I don't regret, now I look forward," she told Sky News in an interview before her divorce was finalised.

She is to lose the title "Her Royal Highness" and receive a \$3 million divorce settlement.

But most of the money will go to her daughters, Beatrice and Eugenie, who remain fifth and sixth in line to the throne.

Fergie, 36, is trying to be positive about her new life as she seeks some inner peace. "I look forward to every day now and I look forward to the future," she said.

But she agreed life could be lonely as "the conductor of your own orchestra, to be the conductor of your own mind rather than the mind running you. I suppose I am growing up, you could say."



Siamese twins Shawna (left) and Janelle Roderick are shown with their parents Jeff and Michelle Roderick in a May 14 photo released by Loma Linda Medical Centre (Reuters photo)

Twin girls joined at birth separated successfully in U.S.

LOMA LINDA, Calif. (R)

— Twin girls joined at birth were successfully separated by a team of U.S. surgeons Thursday and were expected to be home with their parents in two weeks.

The three-hour surgery to separate Shawna and Janelle Roderick was "tedious" but "happened very much as we planned," pediatric surgeon Gibbs Andrews told reporters after the procedure.

The only organ shared by the twins was the liver, which surgeons were able to part. Dr. Andrews said each twin's partial liver would develop into a full liver.

The twins were described as being in stable condition at Loma Linda University Medical Centre, 32 kilometers south of Los Angeles. They were born to Jeff and Michelle Roderick of Prescott, Arizona, on May 1 in Prescott.

Michelle Roderick, a schoolteacher, earlier said the twins, born facing each other, had different personalities, one being peaceful while the other cried a lot.

Their grandfather, Will Degerat, described the separation as "awesome, totally awesome."

"There's two little miracles there," he added. Doctors said the twins



Siamese twins Shawna (left) and Janelle Roderick are shown in a May 14 photo released by Loma Linda Medical Centre. The twins, who were born on May 1, were separated in an operation at the medical centre on May 30 (Reuters photo)

would be put in the same cot once their conditions had stabilised, so they could be together, as they had been since birth.

The surgery was carried out by five surgeons, five anaesthesiologists and five nurses with two plastic surgeons in attendance.

A hospital spokesman said the two plastic surgeons were there for cosmetic reasons because the twins shared a single belly button.

New belly buttons had to be constructed for the girls.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, conjoined twins Doris and Bessy Gonzales underwent their fifth operation Thursday at Primary Children's Medical Centre.

The two girls were born in Honduras in September and brought to Utah for the operations. They are joined at the head and still face one more operation this summer.

Surgeons have had a grueling task of disconnecting shared vessels in the little girls' skulls.

Dole says domestic violence spilling into America's streets

CHICAGO (AFP) — Presidential hopeful Bob Dole warned Thursday that a rising tide of domestic violence was spilling into America's streets and said abused immigrant women should be informed about their rights.

"Men who commit violence in the home must understand it's not just a family matter," Sen. Dole said at a school in Chicago's tough west side.

The outgoing Senate leader noted that 85 per cent of rapists are known to the victim — such as in spousal assaults — but added that domestic violence also engenders more crime outside the home.

President Bill Clinton was in Louisiana also talking about crime. He is backing the state's evening curfew for youths in a bid to stem juvenile delinquency.

"The evidence shows that wherever these curfews are in place, they're working," Mr. Clinton told the Women's International Convention Of God in Christ.

Crime, consistently cited as a chief worry by Americans, is a key battleground ahead of the November presidential election.

Mr. Clinton is comfortably ahead in opinion polls but his position appears to be slipping.

A CNN-USA Today poll released Thursday showed that if the election were held now he would beat Sen. Dole by 56 per cent to 40 per cent. In April the margin was 58 to 37.

Sen. Dole's campaign swing on crime this week included this stop to talk to a panel of social workers, teachers and prosecutors about the problems and solutions surrounding domestic violence.

One panelist told him that battered women in the Hispanic community were often told by their abusive husbands that they would be deported if they reported them.

"In Latino areas... the husband threatens the wife that if she does anything she'll be deported even if she has lived here 25 years or was born here," said Sen. Dole, agreeing with the panelists that efforts should be made to inform victims of their rights.

Sen. Dole, who has called for tough anti-

immigration measures, stopped short however of promising undocumented abused women guarantees against deportation.

Asked what he believed were the root causes of domestic violence, Sen. Dole fell back on his favourite election-year issue, welfare reform, and took the opportunity to call on Mr. Clinton to sign the measure he has twice vetoed.

The response angered one panelist, who took Sen. Dole to task for assuming that domestic violence is the scourge of the poor.

"This is one thing that does not discriminate," said Berta Hinojosa, a domestic violence programme coordinator.

Another panelist, a woman physician, also criticised Sen. Dole for shooting down funding for victims of domestic abuse.

From Washington, the Clinton campaign issued its own attack, putting out a list of the president's initiatives to prevent violence against women that Sen. Dole and his Republican majority have opposed.

"Bob Dole will meet today with activist groups fighting to end domestic violence," said the statement.

"Senator Dole should take this opportunity to explain why he has opposed, filibustered and voted against President Clinton's effort to provide more protections for American women."

Sen. Dole shrugged off the assault, quipping: "It must be a slow day at the White House."

He also dismissed Mr. Clinton's efforts to appear tough on crime.

"He's sort of a 'me too' candidate these days," said Sen. Dole, who attended a rally in a California park Wednesday where he called for young violent offenders to be tried as adults.

Sen. Dole denounced Mr. Clinton for turning crime — a top concern among voters despite an actual drop in the crime rate — into a political issue.

But asked whether his address on domestic violence would help him with women voters who generally back Mr. Clinton, Sen. Dole said: "We're closing the gender gap."

Drink but don't get drunk Vietnamese told

HANOI (R) — Vietnam announced Friday it was banning drunkenness, but not drink. A prime ministerial decree said the ban applied in all public places with restaurant and bar owners required to pledge that customers stay sober. Alcoholic drink, however, will continue to be widely available. Drunkenness at home was not covered by the ban. An increasingly austere Vietnam has clamped down on a range of vices in recent months as part of a nationwide government campaign against so-called "Social evils." Targets have included pornography, gambling, prostitution, and foreign products which "pollute" Vietnamese culture.

China city eyes ban on toy warships, tanks

BEIJING (R) — Residents of a Chinese city want to ban World War II models they believe could poison their children's minds with fascism. Xinhua News Agency said Friday. "Many people have suggested that relevant authorities think of ways to eliminate this kind of 'spiritual garbage,' which is poisonous and harmful to children," Xinhua said in a report on northeastern Shenyang city. Toy models of German, Japanese and Italian World War II warships and tanks can easily be bought in Shenyang, it said. China harbours deep anger toward Japan for atrocities committed during its invasion of the 1930s and 1940s. Chongqing, capital of southwestern Sichuan province, banned the sale of toy Japanese and German World War II warships in April.

Watchmaker drops Vogue ads in anorexia row

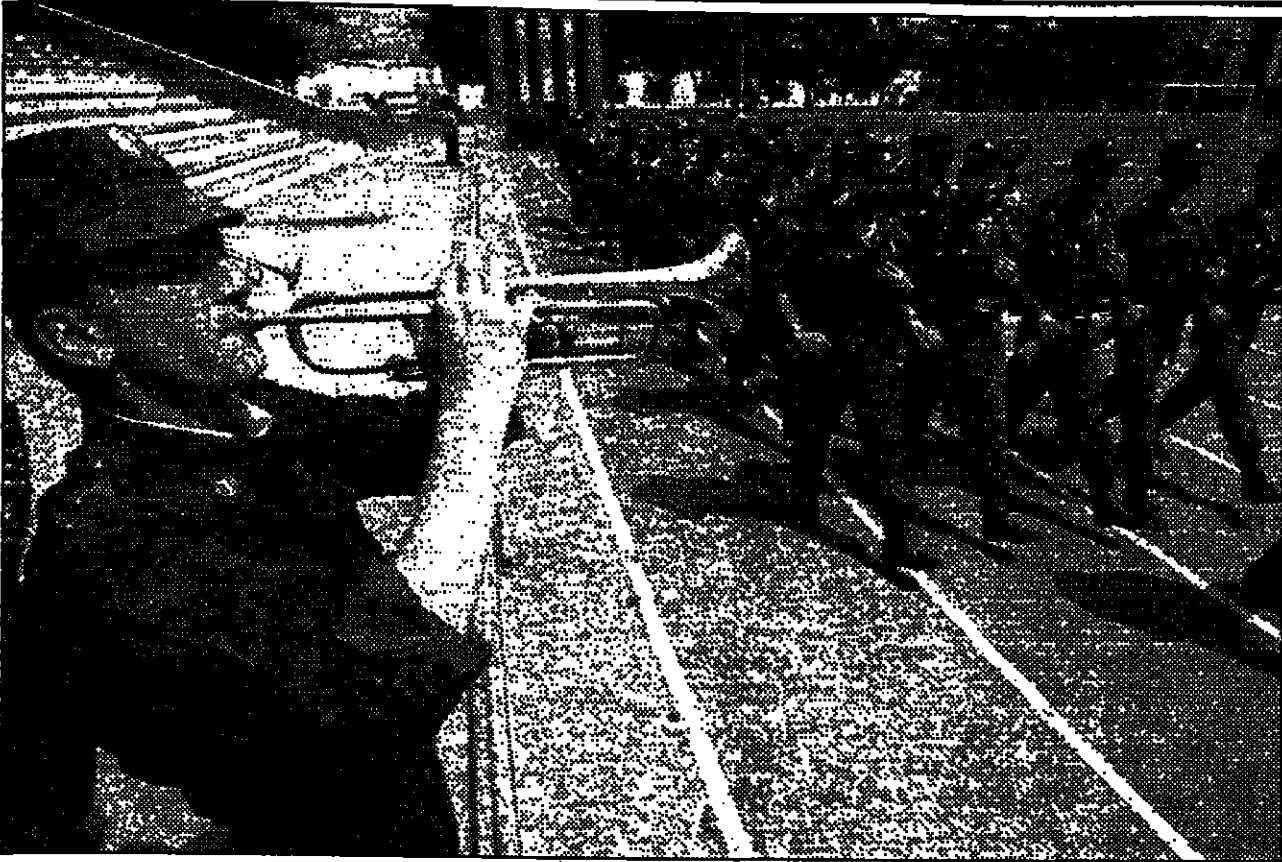
LONDON (R) — Swiss-based watchmaker Omega said Thursday it had cancelled its advertising with British Vogue magazine to protest the use of "Skeletal" models it said could encourage young women to develop anorexia nervosa. "I thought it was irresponsible for a leading magazine which should be setting an example to select models of anorexic proportions," said Omega director Giles Rees. Research has linked the trend for ultra-thin fashion models with a rise in slimming disorders like anorexia. Omega did not say how much its advertising campaign was worth to Vogue.

Singapore Cricket Club hits sex discrimination

SINGAPORE (R) — The Singapore Cricket Club (SCC) is giving women the same status as men for the first time in its 144-year history. The Straits Times reported Friday that the club this week abolished its "lady members" category, allowed women to vote and cleared the way for them to sit on the general committee. "Nobody questioned the ladies being equal members. It was not an issue at all," SCC President Charlie Phua was quoted as saying. More than 80 per cent of 300 voting members approved the changes at a special general meeting, the paper said. The club has 200 women members.

Stressed Singaporeans seek solace in Buddhism

SINGAPORE (R) — More young people in affluent Singapore are turning to Buddhism, the Singapore Straits Times said Friday. The newspaper quoted Venerable Shi Ming Yi, the secretary-general of the Singapore Buddhist Federation, as saying part of the religion's attraction was relief from the stress of the booming island state.



Newly formed units of the Chechen pro-Moscow government's Interior Ministry parade in Grozny Thursday. Skirmishes were reported Thursday between Chechen rebels and Russian troops, just a day before the start of a scheduled ceasefire and 17 days before Russia's presidential election (Reuters photo)

Chechen rebels hold over 300 PoWs — Kulikov

MOSCOW (AFP) — Chechen separatist guerrillas are holding more than 300 Russians prisoner, including 131 federal soldiers, Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov said Friday.

Mr. Kulikov, quoted by Interfax News Agency, told a delegation from the Council of Europe's Commission on Human Rights that 187 Russian construction workers were among the prisoners held by the rebels.

He did not specify how many Chechens the Russians were holding prisoner. The separatists have claimed that the Russians are holding more than 1,000 Chechen prisoners, a figure rejected by Moscow.

Russian officials said peace talks with Chechen rebel leaders were due to resume Saturday in the Dagestani capital Makhachkala, focusing on a mechanism for implementing their ceasefire accord and a prisoner exchange.

A ceasefire accord reached in the Kremlin Monday by President Boris Yeltsin and Chechen rebel chief Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev committed both sides to an exchange of all prisoners within two weeks.

The ceasefire is due to take effect Saturday. Mr. Kulikov also told the Council of Europe delegation that Russian troops would withdraw from Chechnya in phases.

"The first phase is in June, the second phase will last until September-October and the third phase will last until the end of the year," Interfax quoted him as saying.

One brigade of Russian Interior Ministry troops and one motorised rifle brigade of federal army troops would remain in the breakaway north Caucasus republic. Their numbers would be boosted and they would get extra armoured vehicles, Mr. Kulikov said.

He cautioned that the withdrawal would depend on the military situation

in Chechnya.

Mr. Kulikov said the Chechen separatist forces now numbered no more than 4,000, including up to 800 "die-hard" fighters, about 200 "foreign mercenaries" and up to 3,000 volunteers.

He said 16,000 Chechen rebels had been killed in the war, which erupted when Russian troops poured into the republic in December 1994 to crush the Chechen independence movement.

Both sides in the conflict have made exaggerated claims, and there was no independent confirmation of Mr. Kulikov's figures.

More than 30,000 people, mostly civilians, have died in the war, according to independent estimates.

Russian military officials in Chechnya said rebels continued firing at federal positions in the past 24 hours, killing one Russian soldier.

Meanwhile skirmishes were reported Thursday between Chechen rebels and Russian troops, just a day before the start of a scheduled ceasefire.

At the same time, the Moscow-installed Chechen leader slammed Mr. Yandarbiyev as a "bandit," souring the atmosphere around the truce signed by the Kremlin and the rebels Monday.

Russian positions came under fire six times in the regional capital Grozny during the night and into Thursday morning, Russian news agencies, quoting officials in Russia's Joint Military Command in the region, said.

No details were given and there was no word on casualties.

Interfax said a Russian reconnaissance unit was being attacked by the rebels in southern Chechnya Wednesday but it repelled the attack, killing two separatists.

In a separate incident, also Wednesday, a Russian helicopter was shot down in the southeast, ITAR-TASS news agency said. Two Interior Ministry troops were killed and seven

wounded, it quoted a ministry statement as saying.

But the violence seemed to be on a much lower scale than before Monday when rebel leader Yandarbiyev and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed the framework agreement, providing for a ceasefire to begin at midnight Friday.

The press secretary of the Russian State Commission seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis, Sergei Slipchenko, said the violence would not stop talks going ahead.

"Talks will be continued whatever the circumstances," Interfax quoted him as saying.

But the talks could be shaken by remarks made Thursday by the Moscow-installed leader of Chechnya, Doku Zavgayev, who bitterly attacked Mr. Yandarbiyev.

"He (Yandarbiyev) represents bandits and he himself is a bandit," Mr. Zavgayev told a news conference in Grozny. "If I am wrong, let him take me to court."

"I will say more — there is a criminal case open against him. He is a wanted man. He was not detained (in Moscow) only because the President (Yeltsin) had guaranteed his safety."

Mr. Yandarbiyev was named overall rebel leader after Dzhokhar Dudayev, who had led Chechnya's independence drive since 1991, was killed in a rocket attack on April 21.

Mr. Zavgayev, elected last December in a vote which most observers called unfair and which was ignored by areas held by the separatists, was unhappy at being sidelined.

In Moscow, the rebels, who view Mr. Zavgayev as a traitor, bluntly refused to accept him as the third party in the talks and Mr. Yeltsin made him a member of the Moscow delegation.

The accord did not touch on the most controversial issue — Chechnya's future political status.

Yeltsin tells Russians reforms to create 'normal way of life'

PERM, Russia (R) — President Boris Yeltsin unveiled a reelection manifesto Friday in which he pledged further reforms to create "a normal way of life" for Russia, but he also admitted mistakes in his past five years in office.

"The main aim of my programme is a normal way of life for every person, for every family, for our society and for the state, without revolution, without upheaval, without coups d'etat, simply normal life," the Kremlin leader told a rally in the Ural city of Perm.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, issued his programme against a background of widespread discontent over the impact of five years of market reforms which has provided ammunition for his communist rival, Gennady Zyuganov, in the campaign for the June 16 election.

Millions of Russians have seen their rouble savings wiped out in the chaotic transition to a market system and many have been pushed below the poverty line.

"I feel your pain, the pain of the country. But this is the pain of a recovering organism," Mr. Yeltsin said in his 127-page programme, a text of which was issued in Moscow.

Mr. Yeltsin, said by opinion polls to have edged out in front of Mr. Zyuganov in recent weeks after trailing for months, pledged in the document to press ahead with liberal economic reforms while protecting the domestic market and wipe out the budget deficit by the end of the century.

Also at home, Mr. Yeltsin promised steps to strengthen democracy through "evolutionary, not revolutionary, development, without political opponents being suppressed."

On Chechnya, where he has tried to patch up a peace to help him through the election, Mr. Yeltsin said the Russian leadership remained open for talks with anyone.

But he took an uncompromising line over the status of the rebel region, saying it remained an integral part of the Russian Federation.

On foreign policy, Mr. Yeltsin said Russia remained committed to deepening relations with the United States and its European partners following its accession into the Council of Europe.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin uses one of his aide's back to sign autographs during a meeting with his supporters in the city of Perm Friday (Reuters photo)

He made no mention of NATO plans to expand to take in some of Russia's former satellites in Eastern and Central Europe to which Moscow is strongly opposed.

Mr. Yeltsin restated his intention to end the military draft by the year 2000 and switch over to a professional army, an aim which many military commentators have said is unrealistic because of cost.

Elsewhere on defence he pledged to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent for Russia, put a greater accent on producing more accurate weapons and developing the defence infrastructure.

"The path which Russia is following is the right one and the only possible one," the president said in his speech in Perm raising the curtain on the programme. "Only this can lead us to our cherished goal of renaissance of a great state."

Mr. Yeltsin, laying a wreath to the heroes and workers of World War II in Perm, said he hoped to win in the June 16 first round of the election and he urged people to: "Vote for Russia, for its future, for your children."

Asked if he hoped to win in the first round on June 16, Mr. Yeltsin said: "Let's agree, we will win in the first

round."

Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Zyuganov are way out ahead of the nine other candidates for the Kremlin top job. But though most opinion polls put Mr. Yeltsin ahead of Mr. Zyuganov, he is well short of the 50 per cent which would give him a first-round victory. Most pollsters say the election will go to a head-to-head clash between the two men in early to mid-July.

After laying a wreath at a larger-than-life statue of a worker, a soldier and an idealised mother Russia, Mr. Yeltsin spent 45 minutes talking to a crowd of 400 to 500 people.

There were as many anti-Yeltsin banners as there were proclaiming support for the president.

Alefina Ulrikh, 66, carried a Communist banner and said: "I get a pension of 250,000 rubles (\$50) a month but it never arrives on time. In the old days, we could afford to go on holiday. Now I can't even afford to write a letter. An envelope costs 1,200 rubles."

An opinion poll by the independent Public Opinion Foundation gave Mr. Yeltsin a big lead, showing 34 per cent support for the president and 22 per cent for Mr. Zyuganov, after a 29-24 per cent result the previous week.

Adams to accept result of Irish talks

BELFAST (R) — Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams said Friday he would accept the outcome of all-party peace talks even if they failed to deliver his goal of a united Ireland.

The remarks by the leader of the IRA's political wing were published as Northern Irish election officials started counting votes after a day of balloting called to choose delegates to talks on the future of the province.

Most politicians and academics say they expect the results, due late Friday, to reflect the long-standing balance of power in the province, where pro-British Protestant Unionists hold a 60 per cent majority.

Mr. Adams, who at first rejected the election, has embraced it as a chance to renew his party's claim to a role in negotiations. He said he saw the talks, due to start on June 10, as the best route to peace.

"We're now seeking to bring an end to the conflict — not an end to the Republican struggle, which can go on a new plane," Mr. Adams told the Financial Times newspaper.

Mr. Adams comments were in line with recent statements by the Irish Republican Army guerrilla movement that the Northern Ireland conflict can only be resolved in talks.

"If there is equality of treatment (for Catholics), if there are broad democratic rights, if there is an understanding between the two governments which can meet the consent of all the parties, then we have eased ourselves out of the potential of another 25 years of conflict," he added.

"It might not be as much as we want this time, maybe it will be, but let's make it work. Sinn Féin will be bound by any agreement to which we are a party."

N. Korean defectors arrive in Seoul

SEOUL (R) — Two North Korean defectors, holding hands and looking nervous, arrived in Seoul Friday, raising new doubts about the loyalty to the Pyongyang government of the country's elite.

The two joined a North Korean Air Force captain who fled to Seoul last week in a MiG-19 warplane.

"Thank you very much for warmly welcoming U.S. like this. I'm overwhelmed with happiness and don't know what to say," said Chung Kab-Ryol, a scientist at Pyongyang's State Research Institute.

He and Chang Hae-Song, a drama scriptwriter, both looked ill-at-ease as they posed for photographers and camera crews at Seoul's Gimpo Airport before being driven away in black limousines by security officials.

Seoul officials said the two men flew from Hong Kong on a scheduled Korean Air Lines flight.

"The fact that elite North Koreans are fleeing the society illustrates the loosening of the North Korean regime's control," said Yu Suk-Ryul, a senior fellow at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security.

"This could make North Korea more defensive. North Korea is likely to claim the defectors had been kidnapped and might use it as an excuse to avoid dialogue with the South," he said.

Other commentators have speculated that support for North Korea's isolated Stalinist regime is breaking down in the face of acute food and energy shortages.

Earlier this week, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies appealed for \$5.25 million in aid to prevent famine in North Korea.

South Korea and the United States last month proposed four-nation peace talks,

inviting North Korea and China to join them in trying to hammer out a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

North Korea, the arch enemy of the South since the 1950-53 Korean War, asked for more details from the United States but has not made a formal response to the proposal.

Seoul officials said the Hong Kong office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees confirmed Thursday that the two North Koreans intended to defect to South Korea.

Mr. Chung and Chang were to talk to reporters after they were debriefed by security officials, they said.

South Korean state television said Mr. Chung had won a silver medal at an international invention and technology exhibition last month in Geneva and feared he would be punished if he returned home because he did not win the gold.

Media reports said Mr. Hang fled to China in January after a conversation in which he criticised North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il was reported to the authorities.

North Korean Air Force Captain Li Chol-Su, joining about 600 defectors living in the South, said he wanted to escape rampant corruption.

Meanwhile U.S. Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale told a news conference Friday the situation in North Korea is murky, but profound economic stress might push Pyongyang to do "desperate and foolish things."

"I don't think...anybody is very confident they really know fundamentally what is going on and what is likely to happen," Mr. Mondale said.

"We do know that North Korea is a country under profound stress, its economy is slipping badly, it's well known that malnutrition, maybe hunger, is widespread."

EU urges partial rerun of Albanian election

ROME (R) — The European Union urged Albania Friday to stage a partial re-run of its strongly disputed general election and signalled that adherence to democratic standards was essential to better relations.

Italy, current holder of the EU presidency, issued a statement expressing concern about the situation in Albania following consultations among members of the 15-nation bloc.

It said the two-round election, boycotted by opposition parties which have called the ballot rigged, had to be conducted "in full respect for international standards and principles."

"The European Union addresses an appeal to the Albanian government to do its best to ensure the conditions for an ordered pursuit of the electoral process," the statement said.

"This includes the repetition, in compliance with current electoral rules in Albania, of elections in constituencies in which grave irregularities were ascertained."

The statement urged all parties in Albania to show responsibility and resume dialogue, adding:

"The continuation of the electoral process in conformity with international democratic standards constitutes an essential element for the further fruitful development of relations between the European union and Albania."

President Sali Berisha's ruling Democratic Party won 95 seats or 67.8 per cent of the vote last Sunday in the first round of an election that was boycotted by the opposition and criticised as inadequate by Western observers.

Opposition parties, including the Socialist Party of former Communists, said they would not take part in a second round this Sunday to decide remaining seats in the 140-member parliament.

Opposition leaders were beaten and temporarily detained by police Tuesday when they tried to stage a rally to protest at the alleged manipulations and demanded a fresh ballot.

The Italian statement, issued by the Foreign Ministry, echoed other expressions of Western disquiet over the elections, the third multi-party parliamentary vote in Albania since Stalinist rule collapsed in 1990.

On Wednesday, Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti, the chairman of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), also urged Albania to consider a partial rerun of its election for the sake of democratic stability.

He based his appeal on the findings of observers from the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and sounded a warning that controversy over the conduct of the poll could stunt Albania's development as a democracy.

The ODIHR released a provisional post-election report Wednesday. It stopped short of condemning the elections but said that at times they had failed to meet legal standards.

Albania's Central Electoral Commission has acknowledged that irregularities took place in three constituencies and that elections there would be held again but political analysts said this was unlikely to satisfy opposition leaders.

Unidentified noise reported on ValuJet cockpit tape

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. safety officials investigating the crash of a ValuJet DC-9 have said they had picked up an unidentified noise on the cockpit flight recorder just before the pilot said he had to turn back to Miami.

They said the pilot of the ill-fated plane questioned this sound about five minutes after takeoff from Miami. About five seconds after that, voices were heard from the passenger cabin reporting fire.

Eleven seconds later, the first officer asked Miami Air Control for clearance to return to the airport, which was immediately granted, the tape showed.

But National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) officials said they were

still studying the tape, dug out of muck in the Florida Everglades, and no conclusion should be drawn from the unidentified sound or two gaps in the tape.

The DC-9 crashed on May 11 shortly after taking off from Miami for Atlanta, killing all 110 people on board.

The investigators said one of two gaps in the cockpit tape started one minute and 39 seconds after the unidentified sound and lasted about one minute and 17 seconds and the other occurred shortly before the end of the tape.

They said they were working to link the timing of the apparent power interruptions that caused the gaps to information from the plane's light data

recorder and air traffic control and radar data.

The investigators said the plane's public address system seemed to function properly during the cockpit recording and the plane and its systems appeared normal prior to the unidentified sound.

Investigators have been looking into whether a fire may have started in the plane's cargo hold when one or more oxygen generators being carried there accidentally activated.

Board officials could not say when they might complete their investigation. More analyses of the cockpit and flight recorders were needed as well as correlating that data with information from air traffic controllers in Miami.



South Korean Chosun Ilbo daily newspaper shows a picture of a North Korean man, who was identified by the newspaper as Chung Kab-Ryol, a scientist at Pyongyang's State Research Institute, is seeking asylum in Seoul. The newspaper said the picture was run on a January issue of a North Korean monthly magazine (Reuters photo)

Jordan Times

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Cushion for the blow

AGAINST INITIAL expectations, and in what many perceive as a major blow to the peace process in the Middle East, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu has won Israel's election for the premiership. Though he won by a very limited margin, Netanyahu now has a mandate to lead his people according to his own vision and his rightist coalition's platforms.

For many in the region, this is bad news, since the Likud-led political and religious groups have adopted such a hardline position on the peace process that is terribly difficult to bridge with the Arab side, particularly the Syrians and the Palestinians. Netanyahu has declared that he will never allow the establishment of a Palestinian state, that he will never give up Israel's occupation of Arab East Jerusalem, that he will beef up settlements in the West Bank from which he said he will never withdraw and that he will not make any concessions regarding the thorny issue of refugees. These are positions that bode extremely ill for the peace process and substantially reduce the chances for reaching an acceptable solution to the Palestine problem.

The crucial question, however, is whether Netanyahu, the prime minister, will assume the same attitudes as those he held as the leader of the opposition which has had an interest in discrediting all the policies of the incumbent government.

Not only common sense but also Israel's real strategic interests would dictate that Netanyahu and his colleagues be humbled by the responsibilities of office and will thus act more responsibly towards issues that affect the future of their country as much as the whole region of the Middle East. Another important factor that is likely to push Netanyahu towards a more moderate position is the weight of the United States which has invested considerable time and effort in the peace process and thrown its prestige behind it. The new Israeli prime minister is unlikely to jeopardise his state's unique relations with Washington, and indeed growing ties with the rest of the world, just to vindicate stands and slogans that are either appealing to cynics and extremists among Israelis or belong to a bygone era of Middle Eastern history. But it is not just under pressure from the United States and Arab countries, which will be strongly inclined to freeze all efforts towards normalisation of ties with Israel, that the next government will have to adapt its policies to the new realities in the region and the world as a whole. Netanyahu and his team will also be pressed from an equal half of the Israeli population and Knesset who have voted for peace. Labour and other peace supporting members of the Knesset are still a force to be reckoned with in Israel's future decisions concerning peace.

There is no reason to believe that Netanyahu will reverse the peace deals that his country has signed with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. But there is no doubt that Cairo and Amman will reconsider their policies towards Israel if it reneges on its commitments to the Palestinians and does not attempt to strike a compromise with Syria and Lebanon. Jordan in particular signed its peace treaty with Israel as part of a regional effort to reach a comprehensive peace under the Madrid Conference's umbrella. If Israel abandons that cause, the Kingdom and certainly Egypt as well, will be hard pressed to maintain business-as-usual ties with the Jewish state if the latter reneges on its peaceful promises. It is with this mind that we hope Netanyahu and his new government will proceed in formulating their programme and policies in the days ahead.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE NEW government in Israel whether led by Peres or Netanyahu is requested to pursue the peace process and to declare its commitment to peace with the Arabs, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Regardless of which parties will join the Likud, or Labour, in a coalition, and whatever their political affiliation might be, priority should be given to peace and end of occupation to ensure its durability, said the paper in commenting on the initial results of the elections. What concerns the Israeli society as well as the Arab countries is the establishment of a genuine peace on all fronts so that the area can bid farewell to war and embark on a new era of development, security and coexistence, added the daily. Referring to the statements of the leaders of Likud and Labour in the election campaign, the paper said they were both hostile in nature to Arab people's aspirations since they deny the Arabs their legitimate rights in an independent state in Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital and pledge that Jewish settlements will continue to exist on occupied Arab territories.

Jordanian Perspective

'Autonomy for the Palestinians is imperative for any equitable solution to the conflict with the Arabs'

THERE IS little sense in lamenting that right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu has won the race of Israeli premiership and that prospects for peace in the Middle East have been set back. It is a reality that we all have to face in the region, and, regardless of our reservations, should try to be on top of the situation (although it seems a little difficult given the geopolitical and military balance in the region).

In any event, we would be overdoing it a little if we simply accepted that Mr. Netanyahu would have a free run of Israeli politics and would impose the rightist will on the course of the Middle East peace process. For one thing, we should know that Mr. Netanyahu is a skilled politician and a pragmatist at that. This would very necessarily entail that the Likud leader look at the realities of the situation on the ground and reach the conclusion that his argument that autonomy and nothing else for the Palestinians in the West Bank is simply a non-starter. The question is: How long is it going to take him to realise and appreciate this reality as an inevitable element in any equitable solution to the conflict with the Arabs?

The same applies to the key questions of Jerusalem and the rights of Palestinian refugees. It is one thing to issue headline statements one after another while sitting in the opposition bench and quite another having to come to grips with the problems while in power and having to take into consideration a host of other issues, political and otherwise (The funny thing will be, though, whether outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his Labour Party would cry foul every time Mr. Netanyahu inevitably moves towards finding common ground with the Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims over the issue of Jerusalem).

That the results of the elections in Israel were disappointing is an understatement. But does that mean the end of the peace process? We have to consider every element that would come to play and influence Israeli decision-

making under a Netanyahu government.

For starters, Mr. Netanyahu would have to take into consideration the long-term interests of his country in terms of consolidating the formal recognition of the Jewish state as a member of the Middle Eastern order. There is little doubt that he knows very well that his hardline policies and political pronouncements are not the way to go about doing that and that the real avenue to achieve Israeli integration into the region is to accept to respect the legitimate rights of the Arabs — that goes for the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Lebanese.

Keeping in view Mr. Netanyahu's ambitious economic plans in a regional context, it is also clear that the man is realistic enough to accept and understand that Israel's economic ties with the Arab World largely hinges of a settlement of the Palestinian track acceptable to a majority of the Palestinians.

Then comes the international community's approach to the Middle East peace process. First and foremost, the Clinton administration has invested a lot in the peace process and thrown its weight to the approach that the Peres government adopted. It is unlikely that Washington would now step back and let Mr. Netanyahu have his own way of doing things. This would mean implicit and explicit American pressure on the Likud leader to accept some of the basic requirements for a just, comprehensive and durable peace with the Arabs.

Granted that there is no telling whether the Clinton administration would still be in power after this year's American elections. If Robert Dole, the potential Clinton challenger, wins the White House, then it would be some time before Washington could get its bearings back onto the Middle East. But Mr. Dole is no stranger to the Middle East either. However, in the context of the political change in Israel, Mr. Netanyahu would be hard put to turn the potential change in the White House to his advantage. Mr.

Dole's record is very clear and outstanding that he has always put American interests first and that he does not consider unequivocal support for Israel as an American priority. In this vein, Mr. Netanyahu would come under additional pressure.

The Europeans, who have seen high Arab appreciation of their willingness to apply pressure on Israel and have benefited from such appreciation, are highly unlikely to throw in their lot with Mr. Netanyahu and give him the green light to realise his hardline objectives.

On the Arab side, those countries which have initiated dialogue with the Jewish state and those which have agreed to exchange low-level interest sections and trade offices with Israel are also likely to put a brake on all further moves until it becomes clear that Mr. Netanyahu's victory does not mean an end to the restoration of Palestinian and Arab rights and land usurped by Israel.

In sum, the Arab World and the international community hold several aces to counter Mr. Netanyahu. These cards, if rightly used, are much more powerful and influential now because Israel stands to lose what it gained in terms of respectability and acceptance in the region.

So, at the end of the day, there is no reason for us to despair. What we lost in the Israeli election was a dedicated man with vision, whom most Arabs felt comfortable dealing with and often found themselves unable to say no. With Mr. Netanyahu, it is a different case. The Arabs now should be more comfortable to use the card of pressure against the Likud leader than they did while dealing with Mr. Peres.

So, things are not as bad they look on the surface. But the requirement of the day for the Arabs, if they are serious and sincere in supporting the Palestinians, is to get their act together and adopt a collective strategy to deal with the new leadership in power in Israel.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

'By opting for Netanyahu, the Israeli society has chosen the way to extremism'

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

ISRAEL'S ELECTIONS and their initial outcome, Arab and Islamic issues as well as domestic affairs were given prominence in the local papers last week.

Fahd Fanek a writer for Al Ra'i called on Jordan to reexamine its position in light of the elections so as to better understand the ensuing situation and determine the country's policies accordingly.

If the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin seven months ago caused the Jordanian-Israeli peace to turn from warm to lukewarm, the downfall of Peres would make such peace turn cool, and if Ariel Sharon assumes the portfolio of the occupied territories, peace in its real sense would be impossible, said the writer.

He said that in light of the outcome of the elections one can easily claim that the Israeli society is not inclined towards peace with the Arabs and therefore one can also say that normalisation with the Israeli society is almost impossible now.

He said Netanyahu and his rightist groups should thank Hamas and their allies for their success in the elections because their actions dealt a heavy blow to the peace process.

A writer for Al Dustour attributed the success of the Likud in the elections mainly to the suicide bombings carried out by Hamas in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and also to the latest Israeli campaign against south Lebanon which proved futile and failed to stop Hizbollah from launching further attacks. Saleh Qallab said perhaps it was wrong for the Peres administration to hold elections before the American presidential elections because the move deprived the Labour Party of the United States support since the incumbent president in the White House is not in a strong position to lend much-needed backing to the Peres administration at the moment, said the writer.

In the view of Sultan Al Hattab, a writer for Al Ra'i, Israel, which assassinated Rabin with extremists' bullets, has now assassinated Peres with

the ballots. By opting for Netanyahu, the Israeli society has chosen the way towards extremism and further violence and rejected the peace process, said the writer.

Hamas and its allies have contributed to the downfall of Shimon Peres through its bombing attacks and paved the ground for Netanyahu to come to power, added the writer who said Peres's "Grapes of Wrath" campaign against Lebanon accelerated the incumbent premier's downfall because it achieved nothing at all for the Jewish state.

The coming months will be most difficult for the people of this region because the Likud and its allies will find it hard to adapt to the peace process which they might consequently kill and so create new tensions in the whole region.

A writer for Al Dustour drew a comparison between parliamentary elections in Israel and the Arab World, saying that while in Israel political groups compete on the best manner to protect national interests and the future of the country, in the Arab states most candidates for parliament follow no specific ideology and they enter the campaign with no definite programme as they follow no political groups or ideologies.

Oreid Rintawi said that the 120 Knesset members have the real power in determining all economic, social and political changes, but the Arab parliamentarians only follow what the government imposes on them willingly or unwillingly. He said that while the Israeli parliamentarians actually shape the policies of their country, the Arab parliamentarians have no say, particularly regarding foreign policies, simply because the political decision making concerning Arab states is done outside the Arab World.

A writer for Al Ra'i daily focused attention on the situation in the Arab World following the ease of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

We have to admit that many movements in the Arab World which claim to be struggling to promote the Islamic faith, including the armed groups in Algeria, have resorted to killing innocent people in a most barbar-

ic manner and have done more damage to the Islamic World and the Islamic faith than all the media campaigns against the Muslim World in the West.

The writer said that it is most shocking to see the Muslim scholars keep silent and passive towards such actions that deal a very damaging blow to their religion.

A writer for Al Dustour voiced his backing of the Jordanian medical staff employed by the Ministry of Health, stressing that their demand for better pay was reasonable and their stay in their present jobs with their expertise was essential for promoting the medical and health services in the country.

The health ministry has failed over the past 15 years to come up with a plan to develop the medical services and to ensure that doctors and specialists employed by its hospitals and health centres remain in their posts and do not quit for better pay in the private sector hospitals or abroad, said Mohammad Subeithi.

The writer said that it is no secret that the public in Jordan has lost confidence in the government-run hospitals and many who afford medical service outside never hesitate to do so.

By allowing the doctors to leave their present employment with the government due to lack of incentives, the health ministry is responsible for the present situation and for the deteriorating medical services.

Fahd Fanek said that in the wake of the sharp rise in the prices of wheat on the international markets, the Jordanian government should take speedy measures vis-à-vis the situation.

The international price of wheat has risen by 45 per cent at a time when the world's reserves of wheat has dropped by 14 per cent, said the writer. While a tonne of wheat cost \$70 tonnes a few years ago, it now costs \$280. something which threatens many Third World countries' economies with bankruptcy.

Likud win: Failure of nerve by the peaceniks

By Michael Jansen

THE PEOPLE of Israel, voting on Wednesday in a free and fair election, chose the men of war rather than the men of peace to rule them over the next four years.

Among the military personalities expected to be appointed to the cabinet of Premier-elect Benjamin Netanyahu are generals Ariel ("Arik") Sharon, the defence minister who invaded Lebanon in 1982, and Rafael ("Rafal") Eitan, his chief-of-staff, Yitzhak Mordechai (former head of northern command) and Avidor Kahalani (who broke with the Labour Party because of its willingness to make concessions to Syria on the Golan). A fifth general who has been named as a possible wildcard addition to the Netanyahu line-up is outgoing Labour Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, who comes from the hard-right of the party.

Sharon has been tipped for the ministry of finance, putting him in a position to fund Israeli settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. Likud spokesmen have stated that the objective of the party is to increase the number of settlers in the West Bank from the present 140,000 to 500,000. Sharon can be expected to use funds at the disposal of the finance ministry to dramatically increase Israel's presence in and hold on the West Bank, which the Jews regard as their religious-historical homeland but which is, in fact, the only part of the homeland of the Palestinian people where the Palestinians remain a majority of the population.

By increasing settlement and providing employment for Israelis in the West Bank, Sharon could hope to change the demographic balance in this area so much that it would make Israeli troop withdrawal impossible and Israeli settlement irreversible. The Palestinians had counted on the expansion of self-rule to the villages of the West Bank to ensure the gradual hand-over of the land to the Palestinian Authority and the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state. With Sharon sitting in a key seat in the cabinet this will not happen.

General Mordechai, a new member of the Likud, has been proposed as a candidate for the defence ministry while no portfolios have yet been suggested for

either Eitan or Kahalani. And Barak's shift is merely a rumour.

According to the latest statements of Likud stalwarts, the party will retain 11 cabinet places, give two each to the mainstream Ashkenazi and Sephardi Orthodox religious parties (which have 21 seats combined) and one each to The Third Way of Kahalani which broke with Labour over its concessionist policy on the Syrian Golan and the Russian immigrant party.

The rise to power of the Likud in coalition with rightist religious and right-of-centre secular parties will give sectional interests much more influence in determining the policies of the future government of Israel. The Likud which will emerge under the Likud will not be a basically secular, tolerant Israel with a universalist culture. The "new order" in Israel will give more importance to "Jewishness" and Jewish forms of religious culture and practice. The rabbis, like the ayatollahs in Iran, will have the ability to guide policy because they bear some responsibility for the election of Netanyahu.

Indeed, the new government owes political favours to the Ultra-Orthodox rabbis who came out in Netanyahu's favour on the eve of the poll. The rabbis' tactical intervention almost certainly gave him the premiership and, once he is installed, these clerics will expect funding for their religious schools and seminaries, deferment from army service for their students, and a refusal to return Arab territories to their legal owners.

The transformation of Israel from a state inhabited by Jews to the socio-political culture of a "Jewish state" will not happen without pain and could, perhaps, produce violence between the secular community and the coalition of ultra-nationalist communities which favour such a transformation. The communal clash would, essentially, involve class warfare, pitting the more educated, professional secularists against the less educated working class members of the petit bourgeoisie, the class which traditionally supports fascism and charismatic populist fascist leaders. The clash will then become one between the "wise" and the "no-nothings," with the party of the "wise" and far-seeing being, in the long-

term, vastly outnumbered by the "no-nothings" who support the men of war out of fear and machismo, a desire to dominate and a determination not to share their land with anyone else or admit any other claims than their own.

As long ago as 1948, novelist Arthur Koestler, a strong supporter of the Zionist cause, predicted that Israel would become a sort of "Tarzan state," relying on military power to maintain itself in a hostile region. His prediction came all too true. But then in 1991 the Madrid peace conference offered Israel and its Arab antagonists an alternative. But now, at the very beginning of "final status" talks with the Palestinians, talks which would resolve the core issue in the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Israeli people have, once again, voted in the men of war.

They did so because of a failure of nerve. A failure of nerve first and foremost on the part of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his successor Shimon Peres who chose to implement the all-important Oslo accords with the PLO slowly and hesitantly rather than to hurry implementation and achieve real momentum in the peace process.

These Labour leaders also chose to procrastinate over a commitment to withdraw from the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon, preventing progress on a wider Arab front. If Rabin and Peres had taken the bold decisions required since September 1993, the peace process would have captured the imagination and enthusiasm of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and prevented suicide bombers from forcing a suspension of the implementation of Palestinian self-rule. The peace process would have become unstoppable.

The second failure of nerve was of the fifty one plus per cent of Israelis who supported Netanyahu. They preferred to listen to his airy promises of a more secure future than to heed the warnings of Shimon Peres that there could be no secure future for Israelis if the peace process were to fail. But the nerve of half the Israeli public failed only because Rabin and Peres had failed to give people a sense of security just as they failed to deliver to the Palestinians the pledge given in the Oslo and Cairo accords.

If the peace process had flourished, Netanyahu and the men of war would never have secured the opportunity to reverse the modest gains made by the men of peace.

Jordanians see blow to peace

(Continued from page 1)

their neighbours but would rather close in on themselves for protection," he said. "Physical and military security for them depends on internal forces rather than good relations with neighbouring countries."

Jordanians also argued that a Likud government supported by the U.S. would pressure Jordan into assuming a high-profile role in the final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Such a Jordanian role, according to this school of thinking, is aimed at preempting the creation of an independent Palestinian entity.

Supporting that theory are repeated assertions by Mr. Netanyahu himself that he would limit the Palestinian aspirations to "simple autonomy" in the West Bank and would seek a "functional arrangement" with Jordan.

While he would not elaborate on what a "functional arrangement" meant, Mr. Netanyahu has implied that it meant a premature link between Jordan and the Palestinians.

Also worrying the Jordanians is the presence, besides Mr. Netanyahu, of other hardliners such as Ariel Sharon, an open advocate of the so-called "Jordanian option," which, in extreme right-wing parlance, means the displacement of a large number of Palestinians from the West Bank to the Kingdom and creating a Palestinian state in Jordan.

Any talk of such proposals, said Mr. Izzeddine, will derail the peace process, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian track, and introduce "new and unacceptable parameters" to the peace negotiations.

His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly turned down Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's calls for talks on the

future state of Jordanian-Palestinian relations and said that the issue should wait until the Palestinians regain their full rights and are able to exercise self determination.

According to a source, Mr. Arafat raised the issue at last month's trilateral summit in Cairo.

"Mr. Arafat tapped his pocket and told His Majesty that the card of confederation was still there, but the King told him 'please keep the card in your pocket,' said the source.

Jordan has also said that it would play no direct role in the final status negotiations although it was ready to help the Palestinian side if explicitly asked to do so by the Palestinians.

The support that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty received on the local front came largely because it followed the Israeli-Palestinian agreement in 1993, analysts note.

As such, and given the strong Palestinian content in the Jordanian population, public opinion in the Kingdom is largely influenced by developments in the Israeli-Palestinian track.

Amman was careful to adopt a neutral stand in the Israeli election campaign. Officials have said Jordan had signed the peace treaty with the State of Israel and not a specific political party or prime minister. However, analysts believe that Jordan would have liked Mr. Peres to be reelected if only because the Kingdom could "deal easily and continue to work on developing the model of warm peace so as to encourage others, mainly Syria and Lebanon, to join the peace camp," as one seasoned analyst put it.

On the economic front, Mr. Netanyahu has said that he understood the needs of

Jordan to ensure that Jordanians enjoy the fruits of peace and that this could be achieved through a large measure of liberalisation policy that, to a certain extent, is coordinated with an ambitious economic reform programme that he envisages for Israel itself.

But the realisation of the agreements between Jordan and Israel on various economic spheres could be blocked if the Netanyahu government stalled the peace negotiations. As a result, Jordanians, who are already impatient over the lack of tangible dividends of peace reflecting on their daily life, would feel more bitterness, the analysts point out.

However, against this popular rejection of dealing with a Likud leader in Israel, some analysts interviewed by the Jordan Times said that Mr. Netanyahu's victory will not negatively affect the peace process and might even boost it.

These argued that it was a Likud leader, Yitzhak Shamir, who took Israelis to Madrid in 1991 for peace talks with the Arabs, and, furthermore, it was Menachem Begin, also a Likudnik, who returned Sinai to Egypt in return for peace with Egypt in 1979.

"Netanyahu might be able to deliver that Peres did not. It will certainly be a different style or approach, but in politics, it is the result that matters... Netanyahu is a stronger and more headstrong politician than Peres," said a political analyst.

But this view finds very little support among some commentators who are convinced that the peace process will indeed be derailed under Mr. Netanyahu's leadership, and that the Jordanian-Israeli model of "warm peace" sought by the former leadership in Israel and the Jordanian leadership will collapse under Mr. Netanyahu.

"If Rabin's assassination

seven months ago had lowered the tempo of peace between Israel and Jordan from warm to lukewarm, then Peres' defeat might transform it from lukewarm to cold...." columnist Fahd Fanek wrote in Al Ra'i on Friday.

"When the trio of Netanyahu-Eitan-Sharon win power in Israel they have to thank those to whom they owe this victory," Dr. Fanek wrote. "They owe their win to the suicide (Hamas) bombers who did the impossible for (the Likud to win)...."

"As far as divisions in the Jordanian public opinion on normalising ties with Israel," Dr. Fanek continued, "they should end. It is true that we hold on to peace because we have no interest in war, and because we do not want to maintain our western border as a ceasefire line and because rights to our land and water that were restored by the treaty are irrevocable gains. But normalisation with racist (Israeli groups) is out of the question on our part, as it is unwanted on theirs."

Another Al Ra'i columnist, Sultan Hattab, attributed Mr. Peres' loss not only to his bad luck, but also to the fact that he was more popular with the Arabs than with the Israelis.

Mr. Hattab, who two days earlier predicted a Peres' win, even if that meant falsifying the election results, opined that the prime minister's chances for reelection were blown up by two factors. The first was the wave of Hamas attacks, and the second by "Operation Grapes of Wrath" against Lebanon which made him lose the support of Israeli Arabs.

He concluded by saying that "the (new Israeli government) coalition will be a coalition of zealots, radicals and fanatics who make the issue of security the first and the last issue and consider nothing for peace or for others."

Jewish settlers hail Netanyahu as next Israeli leader

By Dianna Cahn
The Associated Press

BEIT EL, West Bank — Aryeh and Odadia Saraf took their jubilant family out to celebrate the apparent victory of hardline opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu in the race for prime minister.

"We feel like this is salvation," Aryeh, a security guard in his late 30s, said with a grin. "We are happy."

Ten-year-old son David proudly wore a Netanyahu sticker on his T-shirt and waved an Israeli flag as the family walked to a restaurant at the entrance to this West Bank settlement for sandwiches.

Their joy reflected widespread relief among Jewish settlers at the apparent end of four years of rule by the Labour Party, which froze construction of settlements and appeared poised to give the Palestinians most of the West Bank.

Odadia said she was afraid that with Mr. Netanyahu only barely ahead after Wednesday's vote and with absentee ballots yet to be counted, Prime Minister Shimon Peres, a former patron of the settlers who became their nemesis, might pull off a miracle comeback.

"I'm afraid to hope for better because of the misery we went through under the current government," she said.

Many of the settlers in this community and others scattered in the west bank hillsides are observant Jews who feel that the territory captured in 1967, the heart of ancient Israel, is their Biblical birthright.

Since Yitzhak Rabin won elections in 1992, the 140,000 West Bank settlers — and about 5,000 in the Gaza Strip — have watched with dismay as the government proceeded with its peacemaking with the Palestinians.

The 1993 Israel-PLO accord set the framework for the establishment of Palestinian autonomy in the areas. In 1994, Israel pulled out of Gaza and the West Bank area of Jericho in a preliminary test phase. Then last year came the hardest blow — a deal handing over all the major West Bank cities, and 27 per cent of its land, to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian authority.

The settlers feared the process would lead to the full statehood of the Palestinians, and perhaps even the uprooting of settlements.

But the Labour Party was

hesitant to speed up the process — and if Mr. Peres is indeed to be replaced by Mr. Netanyahu, such dangers appear to be much diminished.

"I feel like my home is safe," said Noa Lewis, a mother of two in Beit El, after learning of the election results.

The Likud Party leader has even suggested he might try to settle another 500,000 Jews in the West Bank, rendering next to impossible any future withdrawal from the territory where about 1.2 million Palestinians live.

Israel Harel, chairman of the Yehsa Settlers Council, said he thought that was unlikely, however.

"I don't think Mr. Netanyahu will make dramatic changes by establishing new settlements, but nonetheless he is going to lift the embargo, the drought," he said.

Mr. Harel said the council had its own plans to invest \$4 million over the next five years into expanding the settlements. "Our main goal (is) that our homeland will not be divided again and won't become Palestinian territory," he said.

"We certainly believe that our troubles will receive more thorough and serious treatment," said Hagai

Ben-Artzi, a Beit El resident who is the brother of Netanyahu's wife Sara.

There is also uncertainty about whether Mr. Netanyahu will honour Mr. Peres' commitment to pull out of most of Hebron, the last Arab city in the West Bank still under Israeli occupation.

While Mr. Netanyahu has said he will honour agreements already reached, he is known to oppose the Hebron withdrawal as dangerous for the 450 settlers who live among the town's 94,000 Palestinians.

David Levy, a key Netanyahu ally, said Thursday that a Likud government would avoid any action that might endanger the settlers in Hebron.

The Palestinians responded angrily, with many warning of an end to the peace process and renewed hostility between Arabs and Israelis.

Still, the settlers are not monolithic.

One group, led by relative moderate Yoel Ben-Nun, had even supported Mr. Peres on the strength of an emerging proposal to annex to Israel a small part of West Bank land where the vast majority of settlers live as part of a final Israel-PLO deal.

Likud leader pledges to continue peacemaking

By Dan Perry
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who edged out Prime Minister Shimon Peres in cliffhanger elections, has pledged to honour agreements the Peres government signed with the Arabs.

"Netanyahu is committed to the achievement of peace with security between Israel and its neighbours, including the Palestinians," said policy advisor Dore Gold, reading from a statement.

The Likud Party leader is also interested in "strengthening the fabric of peace between Israel and (Arab) countries with which it has peaceful relations," Mr. Gold told a news conference at a Tel Aviv hotel where the candidate was cloistered under heavy guard.

The statement, meant to calm the world's jittery over the future of Mideast peace, came as a final count of Wednesday's vote showed Mr. Peres, the architect of Mideast peacemaking, with only the slimmest of chances for a come-from-behind victory.

Mr. Peres, who was far ahead in the polls when he called early elections three months ago, appears to have been done in by a series of terrorist attacks by Islamic militants and a lackluster campaign.

With 99.9 per cent of ballots counted by Thursday morning, Mr. Netanyahu led the prime minister's race by 21,399 votes — 1,416,280 votes to Mr. Peres' 1,394,881, or 50.3 to 49.7 per cent, according to the central election commission.

With 154,000 absentee ballots still to be counted, the final outcome was not expected before Friday afternoon at the earliest.

Mr. Peres aides were also challenging some aspects of the count, like the relatively high number of spoiled ballots for prime minister.

Mr. Netanyahu met with Likud Party leaders throughout the day, but his aides said he would not begin efforts to form a government until the final vote tally was in.

Still, with most absentee voters soldiers who traditionally lean right, Labour Party officials appeared to be accepting defeat.

"The important thing is that we have a new prime minister, and I hope will all rally behind him," said Avraham Burg, a close Peres ally who heads the Jewish Agency for Immigration Issues.

For many Israelis, the question was whether Mr. Netanyahu would make good on campaign promises that seemed to conflict with his stated intention to also continue the peace process.

Primarily, Mr. Netanyahu has vowed to block the creation of a Palestinian state — which the PLO had clearly expected to be the eventual outcome of the 1993 peace accord that has so far yielded the Palestinians limited autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza.

Instead, Mr. Netanyahu has said he would build more Jewish settlements in the West Bank, refuse to negotiate any return of Jerusalem to the Arabs, and halt a planned Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank city of Hebron.

And while Mr. Peres seemed prepared to give up the Golan Heights for peace with Syria, Mr. Netanyahu vows to hold onto the strategic plateau Israel captured in 1967.

For many Israelis, the Netanyahu victory came as a shock after months in which Peres had led virtually all opinion surveys.

"I think it is going to destroy the peace process. I only hope the damage he causes is not so big that we can't then solve it," said Cpl. Shiri Evan-Chaim, 19, who joined dozens of other distraught Israelis at the grave of Yitzhak Rabin.

In Tel Aviv, Mr. Peres supporters gathered at the site of Rabin's slaying, laying red and white wreaths at the foot of the stairs where Rabin was assassinated seven months ago. "Rabin was killed on Nov. 4 — peace was killed on May 29," read one sign.

Others believed the U.S.-educated Netanyahu would prove more of a pragmatist than his rhetoric suggests.

"Netanyahu will try to purge the extreme ideologies (in Likud) in order to continue the peace process," said David Kimche, a former director general of Israel's foreign ministry.

In Gaza city, Palestinian officials expressed concern about a Netanyahu victory but said the Likud leader could not reverse the autonomy agreements that have already been achieved.

"The situation is going to be a bit more complex, but we are not in a panic," said Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council elected in January.

Mr. Peres did not appear before supporters, and asked his cabinet ministers to remain silent until final results were released.

For the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, a defeat would likely spell the end of a political career that has spanned five decades and included two stints as prime minister.

Mr. Peres appeared poised to capitalise on a strong sympathy vote after succeeded the slain Rabin. In February, when he decided to move up the election initially scheduled for the fall, he was leading Mr. Netanyahu by 15-20 points in the polls.

But the lead began to unravel on Feb. 25, when Islamic militants trying to wreck the peacemaking launched a wave of suicide bombings that claimed 59 innocent lives in Israel.

Mr. Peres held onto a small lead of about five points throughout the past month of campaigning. But Netanyahu managed to close the gap with a delicately calibrated dual message that combined both fear and hope.

On the one hand, he hammered away at the theme that Peres' peacemaking had only brought deadly terrorism to the heart of Israel's cities. On the other, he promised to somehow continue the peace process, but in a manner that involved fewer concessions and would better succeed in guaranteeing Israelis security.

In the days leading up to the elections, Mr. Netanyahu also garnered

endorsements from several leading rabbis, including a mystic, Rabbi Yitzhak Kadouri, revered by tens of thousands of Israelis.

Rabin's widow, Leah, criticised the Labour Party leadership for not making more effective use of her husband's murder.

"I feel like packing a suitcase and quickly getting out of here," Mrs. Rabin said. "They killed the prime minister. Why didn't they make use of this?"

A total of 3.9 million Israelis were eligible to vote and turnout was 79.7 per cent, about average for an Israeli vote.

Like Mr. Peres, Mr. Netanyahu does not observe Jewish custom, but religious leaders apparently felt that he was more respectful of Jewish tradition and would not give up parts of the Biblical land of Israel which includes the West Bank.

In the separate balloting for the 120-seat Knesset, or parliament, the election's biggest winners were the religious parties, which increased their 16 seats in the outgoing parliament to a record 24 seats, Israeli media reported, according to the near-final vote tally.

Mr. Netanyahu's Likud bloc went from 40 to 31 seats. Mr. Peres' Labour Party fell from 44 to 34 seats, and its coalition partner Meretz dropped from 12 to 9 seats.

Two new parties — the centrist Third Way and an immigrants' party headed by former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky — won 11 seats between them.

Zvi Hoffman of the Meitav Investment Firm said the business community in Israel was concerned that a slowdown of the peace process might reverse the boom in Israel's economy, which grew by almost a third in the past four years.

After the election results became known, the Tel Aviv stock exchange's Mishkanim index fell about five per cent, and the Israeli shekel fell by about one per cent against a basket of western currencies.

Netanyahu wins election

(Continued from page 1)

ideas about how to bring peace.

Mr. Peres, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his breakthrough autonomy agreements with Mr. Arafat, was ready to return most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Netanyahu has said he would make Israeli security his top concern and give troops a free hand against Palestinian militants who set off four suicide bombs in Israel this spring.

The attacks, which killed 59 victims, wiped out the 16-point lead Mr. Peres held after the November assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing militant who wanted to stop the peace process.

Fear was a major theme in the Netanyahu campaign, with the opposition leader saying he would make people feel more secure.

In the election results announced Friday, two days after the elections Mr. Netanyahu won 1,501,023 votes, compared to 1,471,566 for Mr. Peres. That was computed as a lead of 50.4 per cent over 49.5 per cent. Another 148,681 votes for prime minister were declared invalid.

In a separate vote for Israel's 120-member parliament, both Likud and Mr. Peres' Labour Party suffered major losses. Likud's joint state with the Geshet and Tzomet parties dropped from 40 to 32 seats, while Labour is now 34, down by 10.

A total of 3.9 million Israelis were eligible to vote and turnout was 79.7 per cent, about average for an Israeli vote.

Mr. Netanyahu has 45 days to form a government, and is expected to meet the deadline without too much difficulty. His likely coalition

partners would be the religious and right-wing factions, as well as a new immigrants' party, the Third Way.

As victory neared, Mr. Netanyahu was forced by some hawkish statements from close allies to address Israeli and international fears that his stated policy of "peace through security" hides a more hardline programme that will topple the land-for-peace process launched by Mr. Peres and his predecessor Mr. Rabin.

Fears for the peace process under Mr. Netanyahu hinge on Likud election stands refusing to consider territorial concessions or an independent Palestinian state in the final status talks as well as plans to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Some believe the U.S.-educated Netanyahu will prove more of a pragmatist than his campaign rhetoric suggests.

"Netanyahu will try to purge the extreme ideologies (in Likud) in order to continue the peace process," said David Kimche, a former director general of Israel's foreign ministry.

Religious Jews and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, who voted for Mr. Netanyahu in droves, rejoiced in his lead.

In heavily secular Tel Aviv, the mood was funeral. Peres supporters gathered at the site of Mr. Rabin's slaying, laying red and white wreaths at the foot of the stairs where he was shot seven months ago. "Rabin was killed on Nov. 4 — peace was killed on May 29," read one sign.

"I think it is going to destroy the peace process. I only hope the damage (Netanyahu) causes is not so big that we can't then solve it," said Shiri Evan-Chaim, 19.

U.S. pledges continued support

(Continued from page 1)

In Paris, the foreign ministry said Mr. Netanyahu's statement that he wanted to move peace towards and to tighten relations with Arab countries were a "good omen."

Spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said "France is happy to note this continuity in Israel's intentions to carry on the work of peace outlined in Madrid in 1991."

In Moscow, the government withheld reaction until final results were announced. But independent experts were quoted by the Interfax

agency as saying they believed that it would be premature to worry about the future of the peace process if Mr. Netanyahu won.

"Everything depends on the cabinet he chooses," they were quoted as saying.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, whose country holds the European Union's rotating presidency, said: "If Netanyahu wins, it is probable that the peace process will slow down."

Other European governments muted their disapproval.

Jordan see no impact on ties

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier in Tunis Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabarti was quoted as saying that "the peace process is irreversible and it is a strategic choice to all parties in the region." "It is just a matter of time before we get acquainted with the new prospective and new style to be adopted by the elected

Israeli prime minister," he told Reuters Thursday while on a visit to Tunis (see story). Jordan has kept its channels of communication open with the Likud leader, who visited Amman twice since the signing of the peace treaty. Jordan has also maintained a neutral stand towards the Israeli elections in order not to be perceived as favouring one side over the other.

Arafat calls urgent talks

(Continued from page 1)

Netanyahu may slow the peace process but would not derail it entirely.

Farouk Kaddoumi, long considered the PLO's foreign minister, also said the victory of religious and hardline parties in the elections pointed to a wave of rising extremism in Israel.

"I don't think Netanyahu will carry on with the peace process easily, but it's not easy for him either to retreat back to square one," Mr. Kaddoumi told reporters at Cairo airport.

Mr. Kaddoumi, whose relations with Mr. Arafat have become strained over negotiations with Israel, said he believed Likud and the Labour party were largely the same, but differed in tactics and the way they presented their policies to the Arabs.

"Labour's policies are concealed by an apparent flexibility which deceives many people, including the countries which back the peace process," he said.

He urged Arab countries to hold a summit to better coordinate their positions.

Syria's ambassador to Egypt was quoted as saying Mr. Netanyahu would put Israel and its neighbours back into a state of war if he tried to implement his electoral promises.

Mr. Netanyahu has said he would not withdraw from the Golan Heights — Syria's main condition for peace with the Jewish state.

The Egyptian government newspaper Al Jumhuriya quoted Ambassador Issa Darwish as saying:

"If Netanyahu implements his statements on refusing to give back the Golan and the rest of the Palestinian territories and to withdraw from South Lebanon, this means he rejects the peace process and a return to the state of war and tension."

The ambassador said the United States and Russia, as sponsors of the peace process, and other members of the U.N. Security Council must convince Israel that

peace will benefit all parties, including Israel itself.

Lebanese newspapers said Mr. Netanyahu's win was a political earthquake that could destroy the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"The Israeli election results amount almost to a universal earthquake," said the leftist daily Al Safir.

"Shimon Peres was not defeated alone. Defeated with him were all those who bet on him (and many Arabs have linked their fate to his) and those who adopted him and consecrated him... the hero of peace," Al Safir said.

The conservative daily Al Nahar said the peace process was in a serious predicament and all its parties, not the Arabs alone, were in a dilemma.

"If Netanyahu rules he can not set a majority in the Knesset except through cooperation with the religious far right," it said in an editorial.

"This means Netanyahu, the prime minister, will have to stand to the right of Netanyahu the candidate, with all that entails of not only torpedoing the current peace process but making it impossible even after a thousand years," it added.

Gulf newspapers warned of setbacks to peace efforts and possible "limited wars."

One newspaper called Likud and Labour "two sides of the same coin" but others said victory by Mr. Netanyahu was the worst option.

The Saudi paper Al Medina said poll results so far proved that most Israeli people "do not see a meaning for peace with Arabs if they can enforce security with arms and intimidation."

Those who voted for Netanyahu... have in fact voted against (Israeli-PLO) Oslo agreements and against the new Middle East," the paper said.

Al Bilad added: "Incomplete peace the Israelis might think of imposing on Arabs... would not bring security for Israel; it would only delay briefly the moment of explosion."

Arab governments under fire over economic woes

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab governments have adopted the wrong economic policies over the past decades and this has led to an accumulation of debt, capital flight and other problems, a senior Arab official said.

Jassim Al Manai, chairman of the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), said in a lecture Wednesday night the combined non-military debt of the 22-member Arab League had jumped from \$57 billion in 1979 to around \$157 billion at the end of 1994. This more than doubled the debt servicing to \$12.6 billion, accounting for 23 per cent of the total Arab exports.

"There is no doubt this debt and its servicing constitutes a heavy burden on the economies of indebted Arab states," he said in the lecture here.

"Unfortunately, the Arab economic policies which were based on state intervention and central planning were not successful as they did not help exploit the available resources while prices were determined according to administrative decisions regardless of the market forces," he explained.

Mr. Manai, whose Abu Dhabi-based AMF is the main financial institution in the Arab League, said government economic policies in

most regional countries had also led to large financial deficits, poor economic performance, domination of the public sector and a weakness in the private sector.

He said such problems had triggered economic reform programmes in some member states but added they were slow and needed time to produce results.

He gave no breakdown for the debt but AMF figures showed Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Sudan accounted for more than half the total.

Egypt and other Arab countries have been locked in reforms to tackle economic difficulties, which also include slow growth rates, high unemployment and inflation, and deficits in the trade and balances of payments.

In the oil-rich Gulf, several countries have followed suit as their economies have sharply slowed down because of a decline in crude prices.

Mr. Manai, a Bahraini, said several Arab countries had remained reluctant to carry out reforms while programmes in some members were unclear.

"In some member states, the public sector is still dominating the economy while others are still practising different exchange rates... In some members, we

still do not find a real banking sector," he said.

"Many Arab countries need to improve their investment climate as international figures showed not only low investment rates in the Arab region but a continuation of the flight of capital from the Arab World."

According to Mr. Manai, Arab countries attracted only \$5 billion in private investment in 1993, accounting for less than three per cent of the \$158 billion invested in the developing countries.

Despite reforms, the level of state control of the domestic economy in the Arab World has remained the highest in the world, with the government owning an average 40 per cent of the national economic institutions, he said.

"The emergence of the new global economic order and the creation of the World Trade Organisation should prompt urgent measures by Arab countries to revise their policies so they will not be on the margin," he said.

"Improving the performance of the economy should be on top of priorities. Arab governments should take more realistic economic measures away from politics... it is time for them to give way to the private sector," he emphasised.

International investment analysts see Netanyahu victory frightening foreign investors

NEW YORK (R) — The prospect of a setback in the Middle East peace process in the wake of the victory of right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu as the new Israeli prime minister will frighten away foreign investors, international investment analysts have said.

Uncertainty about both the peace process and Mr. Netanyahu's economic agenda, specifically his commitment to cutting government spending to reduce the deficit, will send foreign investors to the sidelines for the near term, analysts said.

"Certainly it may suggest we need to adjust our view on Israel, which has been quite positive, and perhaps make it more of a stock selection, an individual stock opportunity rather than the broad-based asset allocation play that we have made it out to be on a 12-month view," Douglas Johnson, senior international investment strategist at Merrill Lynch in New York, told Reuters financial television.

"Hillel Waxman, first vice-president for foreign exchange and securities at Bank Leumi Trust Co. of New York, said the election outcome made foreign investors in Israel nervous.

"I think that is why we saw a five per cent pullback in the stock market," Mr. Waxman said. "Until the government clarifies its positions, foreign funds are going to sit on the sidelines. We will see a significant change in the tone of peace talks and that is going to make people less bullish in the short run."

Itay Makov, a London-based research analyst at Salomon Brothers, said he expects a freeze in direct foreign investment in Israel for the next few months.

"On the direct foreign investment side, I would say we should see some kind of a halt for the next few months until it is more clear where the Bibi Netanyahu government is going and how it will deal with the whole issue of the peace process," Mr. Makov said.

"The question is, 'are they going to be really extreme and try to collapse it or try to work toward a solution by taking a tougher line?'"

Foreign investment in Israel has boomed over the last four years as Israel sealed a historic land-for-peace deal with the Palestinians, signed a peace treaty with Jordan and opened diplomatic relations with a host of Arab and Muslim countries that had

shunned the state for decades.

The so-called peace dividend for Israel was abundantly apparent in the flows from overseas investors. Total foreign investment in Israel increased six-fold from 1991 to 1995. Foreign investment in Israeli financial assets soared to 15 times the 1991 level by 1995, much of it going into stocks.

The nation's gross domestic product (GDP) growth on average was about six per cent per year from 1991-1995, a very healthy pace.

Mr. Makov said a pullback in foreign investment would put some drag on GDP growth this year, perhaps shaving between a half per cent to one per cent off forecasts.

He also expressed concern about Mr. Netanyahu's economic agenda, specifically his commitment to cutting government spending and the deficit.

"Netanyahu will have to

(Continued on page 9)

Likud win likely to offset enthusiasm over Iraq at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prices dipped a little as trading remained stagnant this week at the Amman stock market despite investor enthusiasm in stocks of companies seen to stand to benefit from the recently signed oil-for-food agreement between Iraq and the United Nations, brokers said Friday.

They said uncertainties of the Israeli elections on Wednesday kept investors in check, and depressed the prices.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), as the bourse is officially known, said turnover for the week was 4.15 million dinars, down from the previous week's 4.3 million dinars.

The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies listed in the market closed at 146.97 points, down 0.22 points or 0.15 per cent from the week's opening of 147.19 points.

The report said 3.1

million shares changed hands during the week under 3,414 contracts.

Stocks of 97 companies were involved in the week's trading, with 31 of them closing with gains, 51 slipping and 15 remaining unchanged.

Industrials accounted for 2.3 million dinars of the week's trading, followed by.

(Continued on page 9)

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JUNE 1, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Quickly make plans for the days ahead, whether it be by yourself, working in your study at home or with the assistance of a trusted advisor, who will be anxious to provide you with the necessary information.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study right today the methods necessary to gain your most cherished aims during the daytime. Later this evening a good friend will be able to provide you with valuable concerning an important new business opportunity.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get everything nicely organised in the business world today so that bigwigs whom you consult will be eager to assist you to get ahead faster. Later tonight will be good for discussions with a knowledgeable individual.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be enthused about a new plan of action today which can make your life easier and richer at the same time. If you have some discussions with a bigwig concerning some new project this evening, be as tactful as possible.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get the advice of a clever person in business today so that you will know how and where to invest so that you get the finest returns for not only your financial investment, but whatever effort is placed in the endeavour.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Sit down today with a sensible-fellow associate and plan the days ahead more wisely, thereby coming to a fine agreement on the circumstances on how to proceed. This evening should be spent with your loved ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Make sure you do your fair amount of labour on the career activities which are assigned and you will gain the respect of fellow associates who will back you to the hilt. Drive carefully this evening while on the highway.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Early today make the appointment you wish for entertainment, however, first be sure of the cost which is involved. Show your mate this evening that you are highly devoted to his or her feelings and do not wish any difficulty.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Do whatever will make the situation at your home more harmonious today, so effect reconciliations for any disagreement which may have occurred. This evening plan some special dinner or activity for your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are able to get your ideas across concerning some business deal to those who can be of great assistance very wisely, so get busy early on how to make the formal presentation and then later tonight be patient for good results.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can do much today to gain an added steady income in the days ahead, if you allow an expert to assist you with the fine details which are involved. You can meet with good friends for some fun later this evening.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have personal desires which can be gained if you go after them tactfully at this time so that you can acquire the respect of your bigwig in charge of your career status. Make your appearance more attractive for the evening ahead.

Birthstone of June: Emerald — Citrine

Seminar addresses global airline growth, liability concerns

By Casey Stephens
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Growth and liability are two of the major issues facing the global air community, said Peter Haanappel, director of the European affairs at the International Air Transport Association (IATA), in a seminar at the Institute of Diplomacy Thursday.

The tendency among international companies in recent years to enlarge airlines are no exception to international trends, Dr. Haanappel said in the seminar entitled: "The latest

global aeropolitical developments and their impact on the Middle East, with particular emphasis on Jordan," sponsored by the Institute of Diplomacy, Royal Jordanian and IATA.

The main advantage to airlines of increased size is the improved economic scope and networking. Larger airlines are able to extend services to a greater area to a bigger market.

Three of the important ways for an airline to increase in size are through mergers, takeovers and alliances, Dr. Haanappel said.

While mergers and takeovers have become popular among airlines within the same country, very few mergers or takeovers have taken place among international airlines.

"Airlines remain national industries involved with international activity," Dr. Haanappel said. As a result, airlines have not moved past cooperative alliances with airlines from other countries.

Although alliances offer airlines an increased market

(Continued on page 9)

WANTED
For work at commercial dept., a qualified, experienced female graduate, with excellent English, commercial correspondence, computer/word processor skills. Expatriate ladies living in Jordan may also apply. Please send your CV with phone No. to: P.O.Box 962045 Amman 11196, Jordan. All applications will be dealt with confidence.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen
GIASBERGEN
"If you're calling to criticize something I said, press 1. If you're calling to criticize something I did, press 2...."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argilston
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.
FOBEG
PALLE
DELUVA
DAPRON
Answer here: _____
Yesterday's Jumble: DERBY ADAPT TRYING SPLEEN
Answer: What she dropped at the swanky beauty spa — A "PRETTY" PENNY
(Answers Monday)

Peanuts
SOMETIMES THE BIRD DUNKS THE DOUGHNUT.
SOMETIMES THE DOUGHNUT DUNKS THE BIRD.

Andy Capp
MAY I JOIN YOU, DEAR?
ER... WELL... ER... OKAY.
TCH! TCH! MAKES YOU THINK, DO LASSES THINK OR DO THEY JUST THINK THEY THINK?

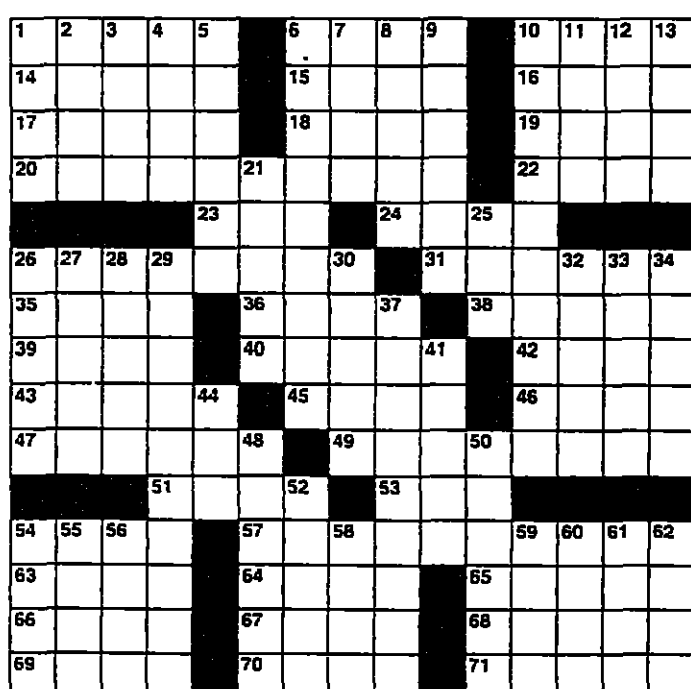
Mutt'n Jeff
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK, MUTT?
WHY DON'T YOU GO OUTSIDE AND SEE HOW THEY LOOK IN THE DAYLIGHT?
OKAY!
NOT BAD!
NOT BAD AT ALL!

THE Daily Crossword by Gregory E. Paul

ACROSS

- 1 Kramer of "Seinfeld"
- 6 Ball of yarn
- 10 1954 sci-fi film
- 14 Felix's roommate
- 15 Mata —
- 16 Light pink wine
- 17 Scarlett —
- 18 Poker phrase
- 19 Mercury or Saturn
- 20 "The Second Hundred Years" star
- 22 Brag
- 23 Dilly
- 24 "I cannot tell —"
- 26 Kurosawa film
- 31 Paris palace
- 35 To shelter
- 36 Marsh plant
- 38 Lizard
- 39 Army div.
- 40 Gin
- 42 Old Hebrew measure
- 43 Maternal relation
- 45 Trick ending
- 46 Bereft
- 47 — pie
- 49 "A — Night"
- 51 Shawl
- 53 Stooze name
- 54 Alcott heroine
- 57 "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" star
- 63 Needle case
- 64 — majesty
- 65 Part of RCA
- 66 Tweed's nemesis
- 67 Vittles
- 68 Images
- 69 Actress Sommer
- 70 RBL, e.g.
- 71 Conductor Koussevitzky

- DOWN
- 1 Kitchen figure
- 2 Dept. of Labor div.
- 3 Surgical souvenir



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HERB BOOR FEATS
ALAE LIME ARMOR
TIME ALQIE CRESS
APRIDE OF LIONS
NED EAR
MAMBIAS VIAL FRO
OCEAN PITS ALIA
THE DETROIT LIONS
TETE AILS ERASE
OISS IRMA PASTES
EISS PAS
THE LIONS SHARE
TIARA NOAH GERM
ELFIN ELLA EASE
METED RAMS DREW

- 41 Miscue
- 44 Musical aptitude
- 48 Russian furs
- 50 Junk
- 52 Kitt feature
- 54 Nola —
- 55 Latin abbr.
- 56 Elephant feature
- 58 Movie dog
- 59 Kentucky Derby
- 60 Fragrance
- 61 Air Force unit
- 62 Samantha's twicher

9

Seminar

(Continued from page 8)

because of the access to more destinations, alliances are inherently less stable than other forms of growth because the companies involved remain separate entities. Dr. Haanappel said. The alliance is an engagement that can be broken while takeovers or mergers are dissolved only in the event of bankruptcy or dissolution of the company.

Additionally, alliances have legal disadvantages, especially when the alliance includes European or the United States airlines where anti-trust or competition laws often require the alliance to meet ongoing approval by their governments.

Another significant issue facing the airline industry globally is the question of liability. Dr. Haanappel said.

Liability without limits should not be a problem for airlines. Dr. Haanappel said. "I do not think this is an undue burden on the airline industry."

Since the suffering party must prove the amount of damages, the amounts would vary from case to case and should not be unreasonable. He added that airlines have become the exception to the rule: Most companies have liability without limits. However, in a discussion period, seminar participants pointed out that while rules dictating limited liability for airlines may be the exception in the West, they are the rule in the Middle East.

The liability airlines should be concerned about. Dr. Haanappel suggested, is strict liability, which places liability on the airline for damages even when the airline proves it was not at fault. "Governments are imposing on airlines...what they are not on other industries," he said.

It is up to the Jordanian government and Royal Jordanian Airlines to decide how it will use inter-carrier airline agreements with regards to liability, Dr. Haanappel said.

Each nation should be left to determine the role of its airline: Whether it should serve certain public or political functions, whether it should make a profit or be subsidised.

Dr. Haanappel expressed hopes that international airlines will sign the new IATA Inter-carrier Agreement which will update and restructure some of the international airline rules, but most importantly, will preserve important parts of the Warsaw Contract with respect to airlines. "If we don't (sign the agreement) the Warsaw Contract is going to disappear," he said.

(Continued from page 8)

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A review of news from the Arabic press

☆☆ JORDAN AND Egypt have agreed to voluntarily

dissolve the joint Egyptian-Jordanian Development and Investment Company, which was set up and classified as a holding company last year. According to Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abdul Ragheb, this decision was necessary to open the opportunity for the private sectors in the two countries to take up the role of setting up joint ventures as Amman and Cairo are moving towards full privatisation. A liquidation committee from both countries was appointed to supervise the procedures for winding up the company and dividing the assets equally between the two sides (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

☆☆ THE MINISTRY of Finance is proposing to set up a

official public institution that would look after the organisation and investment of state property. The institution, to be called "The Land Fund" would specifically carry the responsibility of land development and reclamation and putting the appropriate formulas for land utilisation. Such task would include classifying the land into agricultural, residential or commercial categories to be used for investment directly or in cooperation with the private sector. The proposal which details the structure and functions of the entity was presented to the cabinet for further discussion (Al Ra'i).

(Continued from page 8) on Wednesday, said a bro

banks and financial institutions with 1.3 million dinars, services sector companies with 500,000 dinars (and insurance firms with 25,000 dinars.

A Labour victory was seen as a positive boost to Arab-Israeli peace process that would allow increased economic activities.

"A Netanyahu

Brokers said the closing index figures did not necessarily reflect the actual mood in the market. They said there was keen investor interest in dozens of industrial firms which are

seen to benefit from the Iraq-U.N. oil deal under which Baghdad would be able to import food and medicine worth around \$700 million every three months.

dampened by the uncertainties over the Israeli elections," which were held

(Continued from page 8) minister to North America. David Butler said Wednesday...

form a government with religious parties who will demand a lot of money for their support and it will be difficult for him to cut spending," he said.

"I think the current administration has indicated a very very clearly continuing the peace process is one of its' more important foreign policy goals."

significant pressure from the United States to keep the peace momentum alive. Israel's economic

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion market Friday:

U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0829	1.0888
Deutsche Mark	0.4609	0.4635
Swiss Franc	0.5607	0.5635
French Franc	0.1361	0.1368
Japanese Yen ^a	0.8542	0.8575
Dutch Guilder	0.4119	0.4140
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira ^a	0.0456	0.0458
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

^a Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion market Friday:

One U.S. dollar	1.3712/22	Canadian dollar
	1.5298/08	Deutsche marks
	1.7126/36	Dutch guilders
	1.2534/44	Swiss francs
	31.45/49	Belgian francs
	5.1808/58	French francs
	1548.60.1	Italian lire
	108.03/13	Japanese yen
	6.7350/50	Swedish crowns
	6.5420/70	Norwegian crown
	5.9082/32	Danish crowns
	1.4098/08	Singapore dollar
	0.7970/75	Australian dollar
	7.7370/80	Hong Kong dollar
One Sterling	\$1.5432/42	
Gold (ounce)	\$390.50/391.00	

Japan and Korea to co-host 2002 World Cup

ZURICH (AFP) — Japan and South Korea have agreed to co-host the 2002 World Cup soccer finals, a FIFA source said Friday.

A compromise was worked out at a secret meeting Thursday night between former Japanese Prime Minister Kichi Miyazawa and former Korean Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo.

The decision was endorsed by a majority of FIFA executive committee members. Japan had been strongly opposed to co-hosting the tournament but decided to

compromise late Thursday night when it became clear they could lose the whole tournament.

UEFA President Lennart Johansson had proposed the co-hosting in the face of opposition from FIFA President Joao Havelange.

FIFA's 21-strong executive committee had been scheduled to vote on Saturday whether South Korea or Japan would be the first Asian country to stage the World Cup finals.

Soccer, the one 'religion' which unites Europe

LONDON (R) — One "religion" unites Europe. One drug affects the lives of millions on the continent — soccer.

Star players are more famous than popes or presidents. Top matches can leave streets of capital cities deserted or trigger a security operation resembling the aftermath of a coup d'etat.

Small fortunes are spent on teenagers with promise, large fortunes are spent on stadiums, television deals and sponsorship tie-ups. Fans spend their wages on tickets, team clothing and a passion which does not diminish with age or distance.

The European Championships, kicking off in England on June 8, will focus the attention of every soccer fan in Europe.

Many players at Euro 96 are already household names — Juergen Klinsmann, Hristo Stoichkov, Paul Gascoigne — but for others one moment of magic could open the door to a fortune.

A top layer of players already earn at least a million dollars a season. Add on income from footwear and clothing endorsements, as well as personal appearances, and they join the ranks of the multi-millionaires.

In Italy, stars like Fabrizio Ravanelli and Paolo Maldini regularly appear on chat shows. Spain's Ivan de la Pena and Raul Gonzalez, still teenagers and yet to play for Spain, already advertise cars and a bank respectively. Turkey's Tanju Cokak appears in a chocolate spread advert set in prison, where he has in fact spent time for smuggling.

Former German Captain Franz Beckenbauer does advertising, co-hosts a soccer show and commentates. In his spare time, he is also Bayern Munich chairman and, after sacking the coach, led the team to

success in this season's UEFA Cup final.

Fame and fortune come at a heavy price in many European countries. Once players such as Gascoigne leave their penthouse flats and Ferraris, their every step is dogged by journalists, photographers and fans demanding gratification.

Media proprietors believe fans' interest in their heroes is insatiable and supply it by satellite and newspaper.

Italy's Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper sells around 600,000 copies a day and L'Equipe is France's best-selling daily. Portugal's sports dailies, Bola and Record, sell an average of 150,000 copies each and Spain's late-night sports programmes command some of the country's biggest radio audiences. Big business has moved increasingly to link itself with soccer success. Top teams have sponsorship deals, carrying logos for beer, computers and airlines, among others.

But clubs in the smaller countries do not have the income to stop a top player, whom they may have nurtured since he was a child, being sucked away by a big overseas club. Most of the Denmark squad which won the 1992 European title played abroad and every top club will be watching Euro 96 for stars of the future.

Throughout Europe, the rich clubs attract more money and are thus able to afford the best players. More success follows, more fans come through the gates and the divide between the haves and the have-nots increases. Bayern had an average attendance of 59,000 last season and its nationwide popularity guarantees huge merchandising income. Ajax dominates Dutch soccer and sales of everything from red and white bedspreads and golf balls have

helped it build a new \$150 million stadium. Manchester United is one of several English clubs floated on the stock exchange to enable it to raise even more money.

In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, owner of five-times European champions AC Milan, used the popularity of his club and the wealth and standing it brought him as a platform to become prime minister. The marriage of television and soccer has enriched the game and magnates like Berlusconi. The appearance of private networks TF1 and Canal Plus in the mid-1980s meant TV rights became the main revenue for French football as attendances remained low. There is no stadium with more than 45,000 seats in France.

About 25 million of Turkey's 60 million population support Fenerbahce and the club has a transfer budget for next season of around \$26 million. Barcelona and Real Madrid promote everything from credit cards and aftershave to sunflower seeds.

While clubs in England and Italy regularly buy and sell players for \$3 to \$4 million, teams in the former Soviet bloc struggle along as best they can.

Hungarian soccer has yet to recover from losing state subsidies after the collapse of communism and clubs, desperate for cash, sell space on their jerseys several times over. One club even has a taxi firm's phone number on the players' shorts.

Soccer is the biggest game in the Czech Republic but it is hard to tell — first division games rarely attract more than 5,000 fans though ticket prices average only \$1 to \$2.

Red Sox bomb Mariners as Gordon pitches two-hitter

SEATTLE (R) — Tom Gordon pitched a two-hitter and got plenty of offensive support as Jose Canseco belted his fifth career grand slam and Milt Cuyler hit a pair of solo homers in a 10-1 Boston Red Sox rout of the Seattle Mariners on Thursday.

Gordon (5-2) allowed a career-best two hits for his 14th career complete game to continue his mastery of Seattle.

He walked two and struck out four to improve his career record to 12-3 against Seattle and 10-0 in his last 12 starts against the big-hitting Mariners.

Canseco's grand slam and 14th homer of the season off Mariners starter Salomon Torres (0-1) gave Boston a 6-0 lead in the fifth.

Cuyler, who entered the game hitting just .169, homered to give the Red Sox a 1-0 lead in the third and recorded his first multi-homer game by leading off the eighth with a solo shot off reliever Scott Davidson.

Cuyler, who went 3-for-3 with three runs, had just seven career homers in 1,359 previous at-bats.

Paul Sorrento had both Mariners' hits, including his 11th home run with one out in the fifth, giving the Mariners a Major League-leading 88 homers through 51 games.

Seattle's Edgar Martinez went 0-for-3, ending his 12-game hitting streak.

In Milwaukee, Charles Nagy combined with three

relievers on a seven-hitter as the Cleveland Indians halted their three-game slide with a 2-0 victory over the Brewers.

Nagy (9-1) became the first nine-game winner in the American League by winning his sixth straight start.

He allowed six hits and two walks with five strikeouts in seven-plus innings for Cleveland, which stopped its first three-game losing streak since dropping three in a row to open the season.

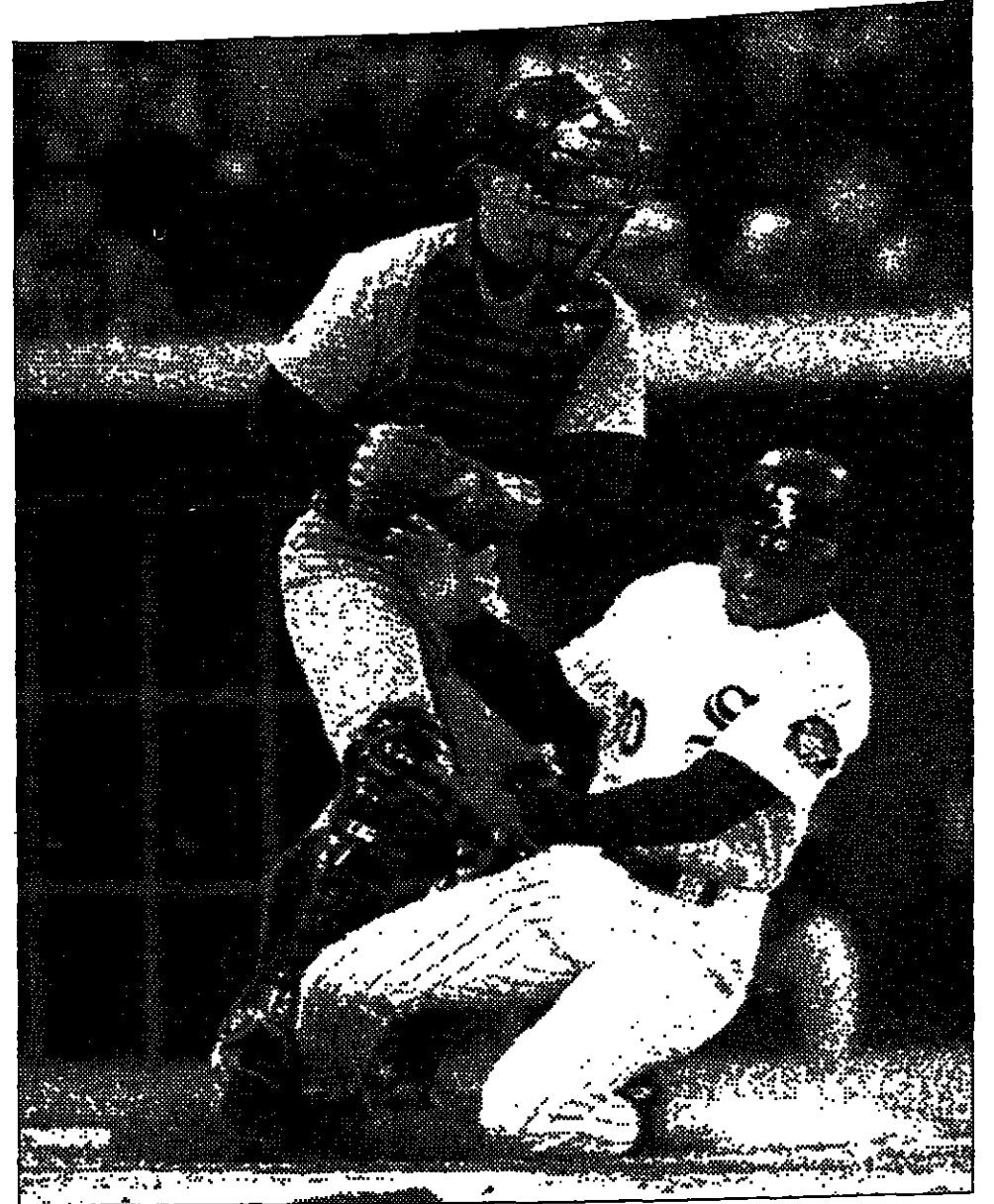
The Indians scored both their runs in the second inning on an RBI single by Manny Ramirez and a run-scoring double by Sandy Alomar.

In Chicago, Frank Thomas, Ozzie Guillen and Robin Ventura each drove in two runs and Wilson Alvarez won his fourth straight start as the White Sox routed the Detroit Tigers 8-2.

Alvarez (6-3), who has lost just once in his last 10 outings, surrendered one run — a homer to Cecil Fielder — and three hits in seven innings for the win.

Thomas had a pair of RBI singles and Guillen had a two-run triple to highlight a five-run sixth inning for Chicago, winner of 10 of its last 12 games.

Omar Olivares (1-2), making his first start since April 15, was touched for three runs and five hits over five innings for the loss.



Chicago White Sox baserunner Darren Lewis is out at the plate after being tagged by Detroit Tigers' catcher John Flaherty in the first inning of game in Chicago's Comiskey Park, May 30. Lewis was attempting to score on a ball hit by Harold Baines (Reuters photo)

Ma's runners to miss Atlanta

BEIJING (AFP) — Controversial coach Ma Junren's runners will not be going to the Olympics after China's selectors rejected the temptation to include his athletes in their Atlanta squad.

Wang Junxia, who defected from Ma's "army" last year, will be present but Ma's current crop of runners, including 1993 world champion Qu Yunxia, all failed at the National Championships in Nanjing earlier this month.

Those championships were used by the selectors as a guideline to pick the squad. "Everyone feels regret that the Ma family army can't qualify for Olympics but the selection was fair," an official said.

Wang, the 3,000 and 10,000m world record holder and the 1993 world champion over the longer distance, ran the year's fastest times in the 10,000 and 5,000m in Nanjing.

It was thought Jiang Bo, Ma's new young hope, might make a final attempt to qualify for the Olympics after her failure in the Chinese Championships but she was told by Liaoning officials not to take part in a race in northern Hebei province.

Ma's original army broke up after a series of rows over his tough discipline and allegations he was

Atlanta-bound athletes must swear they are clean

Chinese athletes selected for the Atlanta Olympics will be required to swear they are not taking performance-enhancing drugs.

The Chinese Athletics Association will require all Atlanta-bound athletes, and their coaches, to guarantee in writing that they are not taking banned substances, the Guangming daily reported.

The measure is among those that China, often accused of systematic doping, has taken to show its willingness to combat drug use after 11 Chinese athletes tested positive at the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games.

Since the beginning of the year, China has administered 479 doping controls in athletics and swimming, the daily said.

The 319 track athletes tested were all negative, while results of 160 tests on swimmers have not been

Wilson pitches Mets to victory

NEW YORK (R) — Paul Wilson, who was facing demotion to the minors after three miserable outings, combined with John Franco on a four-hit shutout as the New York Mets edged the San Francisco Giants 1-0 on Thursday.

Wilson (2-5), who snapped a four-game losing streak, allowed just three hits and no walks with eight strikeouts for his first win since April 22.

The rookie had surrendered 20 runs, 21 hits and 11 walks in his last three outings, spanning just 12 1/3 innings.

"This was me today, I'm pleased," said Wilson.

"Today was Paul Wilson and hopefully you'll see a lot more. I tried to do the same things I was doing at triple-A last year and in spring training."

Added relieved Mets manager Dallas Green: "Paul has worked hard. This is what we have been

waiting for since spring training.

"There was pressure on him. He's a sensitive kid and he wants to be successful. Today was a special day for him."

Franco let a runner reach second with one out in the ninth, but struck out slugger Man Williams and retired former met Mark Carreon to record his 10th save.

The lone run came when Jose Vizcaino singled in Rey Ordenez in the eighth inning, handing Allen Watson (5-5) a tough loss.

Watson gave up six hits and one walk with four strikeouts for his second complete game of the year.

In Philadelphia, Pete Incaviglia singled in Mickey Morandini with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning as the Phillies rallied for a 3-2 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The Dodgers held a 2-1 lead entering the ninth, but Mark Whiten began the

inning with his fifth home run off Todd Worrell (1-3) to tie it.

Morandini then singled and stole second and Benito Santiago was intentionally walked. Incaviglia then delivered a single through the hole into left field. The throw from left fielder Todd Hollandsworth was in time, but Morandini slid under the tag with the winning run.

Toby Borland (2-1) tossed two scoreless innings in relief of Mike Williams for the victory.

Hollandsworth homered for the Dodgers in the first. Los Angeles added a run in the sixth Raul Mondesi scored on a wild pitch by Williams.

Mike Lieberthal, who had three hits, connected for his fifth home run in the eighth off starter Dodgers starter Pedro Astacio to cut the deficit in half.

Christie targets 7th European Cup win

MADRID (AFP) — Britain's veteran sprint champion Linford Christie will challenge for a record seventh successive European Cup 100m win here Saturday.

Christie, who has still not revealed whether he will defend his Olympic title, could also make it a sprint double hat-trick after being drafted into the 200m because of injury to John Regis.

British coach Malcolm Arnold paid tribute to Christie, saying: "Words

can't really express what Linford has done. He is the complete athlete — a giant on the world scene for 10 years."

Sally Gunnell, another British Olympic champion, will be hoping to find some form after a disappointing return to competition following a season out with an Achilles injury.

Gunnell ran a disappointing 55.84sec to come third in Iena, Germany last week, almost three seconds off Kim Batten's world record. Tessa

Sanderson, meanwhile, returns to major international competition in Madrid at the age of 40. Sanderson, who won Olympic gold in the javelin in Los Angeles in 1984, has returned to competition to try and make one million pounds for charity.

Teams: Men - Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Sweden, Ukraine, Russia, Women - Germany, Belarus, Bulgaria, France, Spain, Great Britain, Russia, Ukraine.

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The bidding:

1♠	1♥	1♠	1♥
2♠	2♥	2♠	2♥
3♠	3♥	3♠	3♥
4♠	4♥	4♠	4♥

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

Start trumping partner's ace and you'll become the laughing stock of your club. Yet there's no disputing that, once in a blue moon, it will be the right thing to do! Consider this hand.

After a competitive auction South became declarer at five hearts. Although five clubs doubled would have been set two tricks (there's no

Australian Olympic berth likely

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia needs only a goalless or 1-1 draw in Sunday's Olympic play-off match against Canada here to qualify as the 16th team for the Atlanta football tournament.

The Australians are in a stronger position than Canada after scoring two away goals in last weekend's 2-2 first leg draw in Edmonton.

If Sunday's match is locked at 2-2 after 90 minutes, the first goal scored in extra time will decide the winner. The match will be decided on penalties if there is no scoring in 30 minutes of extra time.

Canadian coach Bob Lenarduzzi said Friday his side lacked discipline and organisation in the first match, and that his midfield failed to compete. "We need to play 100 per cent better than the first game to have a chance of success," Lenarduzzi said.

"To salvage a draw was fortuitous having played poorly, but we're still in with a show, we must tighten up in that area."

Irvine sizzles at Barcelona

BARCELONA (AFP) — Irishman Eddie Irvine upstaged World Championship leader Damon Hill in the dying seconds of the first practice session of the Spanish Grand Prix here Friday, to record the day's best time.

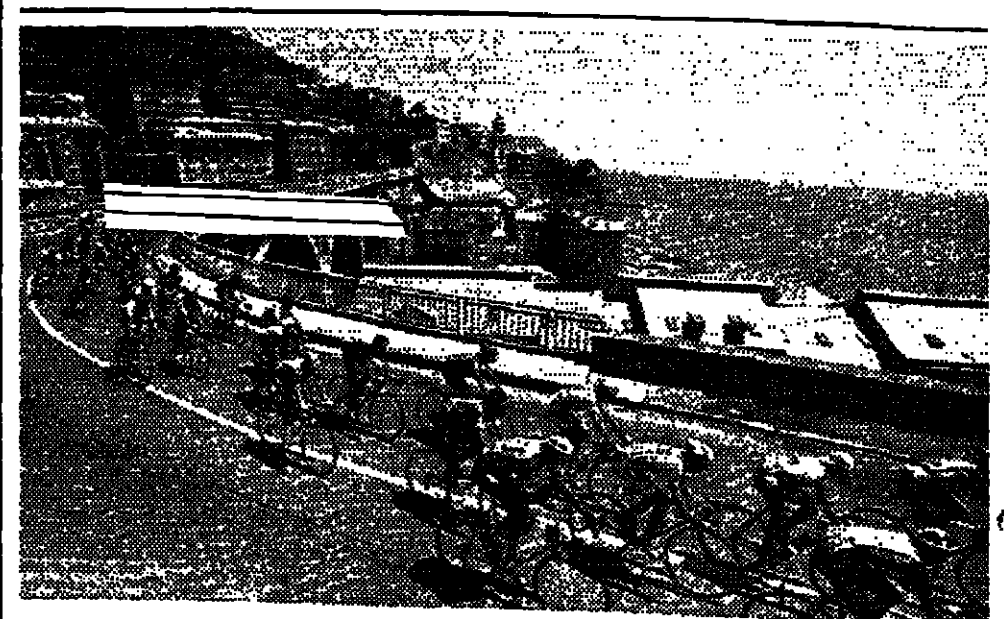
Ferrari's number two driver pushed his car three-hundredths of a second in front of Jordan's Brazilian driver Rubens Barrichello, just moments after Monaco Grand Prix winner Olivier Panis had snatched top spot from Damon Hill.

"It's good to have set the fastest time," said Irvine, who had been lying in fifth place for most of the session before making his late strike. "But it's only practice and it could all change in qualifying tomorrow."

"I'm still finding the Ferrari very difficult to drive, so I think I am some way off a victory just yet."

Hill was not concerned about the dramatic turnaround that saw him slip from first to fourth place in a matter of seconds. He said: "I'm happy with the performance today. Fridays are a lot of fun these days because no-one really knows what is going on. We've got things to work on, but I am sure qualifying will be very close."

Hill's Williams team have often kept something in reserve during practice this season before producing the goods in the one-off qualifying sessions on Saturdays. The 35-year-old will still start favourite to claim pole tomorrow.



The pack of riders competing in the 195-km 12th stage of the Giro d'Italia cycling race pass by the sea in the town of Bogliasco May 30. Italian Fabiano Fontanelli won the stage and Italy's Davide Rebellin retained the over-all race leader's pink jersey (Reuters photo)

Juventus match creates ticket frenzy in Vietnam

HANOI (R) — Tickets for Sunday's soccer friendly between Vietnam and new European champions Juventus sold out days ago and touts are enjoying a brisk market in a nation anxious for a place in world football.

The cheapest black market tickets on sale outside Hanoi's 17,000-capacity stadium on Friday were going for about \$8, the equivalent of five days' pay for the average office worker in the Vietnamese capital.

One newspaper reported that touts were selling seats for up to \$100 a pair.

The Southeast Asian country's most important event for five years, the Communist Party congress, gets under way next month. But when tongues are loosened in city beer houses these days, it is talk of soccer and not politics that fills the air.

"This is a big event for football in Vietnam," Tran Bay, secretary general of the Vietnam Football Federation said. "Football has run in the nation's blood for a long time."

Young Vietnamese crowded around Juventus striker Gianluca Vialli and shrieked his name as he emerged from the team's Hanoi hotel on Friday.

Dozens of others climbed fencing around the stadium to get a glimpse of the players as they inspected the pitch and then followed the team back to the hotel on motorbikes.

Hopes for victory against the Italian side rose this week after they lost 4-0 to South Korea.

"There's hope yet," wrote the daily Vietnam News on Wednesday. "Juventus... looked tired after their long flight and

they struggled against the fit Koreans."

That same wishful thinking emerged after a recent two-leg match between Vietnam and the British semi — "professional side Middlesex Wanderers. Vietnam lost the first match but one newspaper commented that the country had made it to international standard football when they won the second.

Vietnam has been a member of FIFA since 1962. But years of war and poverty held the country back from taking football beyond an amateur sport dominated by teams from the army and police.

Bay said it would take at least five years and investment of about \$30 million to turn the top six clubs of the Premier Division into professional teams.

Nevertheless, interest in soccer is growing.

City streets come alive in the evening with children dodging the traffic as they scuff a ball between makeshift goalposts.

When Vietnam beat Burma last year, scores of fans raced on motorbikes through the streets of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in unprecedented scenes of jubilation.

The mood turned grizzly after Vietnam's defeat by Thailand in Ho Chi Minh City, where hundreds of youths went on a rampage of destruction. Traffic lights and telephone booths were smashed, stones and other objects were hurled at the Thai consulate and about 30 police officers were injured.

But Bay said he was more concerned about evidence that many matches were being fixed for large payments of cash under the table.

Makinen predicts tough race in Greece

ATHENS (R) — World Rally championship leader Tommi Makinen has predicted that next week's Acropolis Rally, the fourth round of the World Championship, will be the toughest ever.

After a hard week of practice blighted by torrential rain, Finnish Mitsubishi driver Makinen said: "I have to say that the stages are in a hell of a rough state. I spoke with (world champion) Colin McRae and the others and they can't remember it so rough."

"It's such a difficult rally that anything could happen.

To win you will have to have a lot of luck to avoid any big problem."

Heat, dust and rocks are the traditional Acropolis hazards and teams fear that dry weather could rip tyres to pieces.

With a five-point lead over Spanish Ford driver Carlos Sainz, Makinen can afford to settle for a place in the top three, if his burning desire to win will let him.

Britain's McRae has no such choice. He badly needs to win after wrecking his Subaru during the previous event in Indonesia.

World Cup qualifiers

Argentina face altitude, Chile return after ban

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Argentina confront their fear of heights when they take on Ecuador in a World Cup qualifying match open Sunday while play their first game in the competition for seven years after being banned last time.

Daniel Passarella's team seemed more worried about playing in the Ecuadorian capital Quito at 2,800 metres above sea level than about their opponents when they left Buenos Aires on Thursday.

Striker Gabriel Batistuta, who will become the top scorer in the history of the Argentine national team if he gets a goal on Sunday, was also angry about a decision to play the match at 11.30 a.m. local time.

"It's a disgrace," said the Fiorentina striker, who is currently level with Diego Maradona's total of 34 goals for Argentina. "Everyone knows how hot it is in Quito at midday."

Batistuta will be partnered in attack by Claudio Caniggia, providing the Boca Juniors player has recovered

from a knee injury. "The knee is still bothering me but I want to play the whole game," he said.

Although Ecuador have never reached the world cup finals, they began the qualifiers with a 4-1 win at home to Peru in April and defeated Argentina 1-0 the last time the two countries met, in a friendly shortly before the 1994 World Cup.

Coached by Colombia's Francisco Matunana, who led his own country out of soccer obscurity to two successive World Cups as coach, Ecuador have made huge

steps forward in the last decade.

The game will be played amid tight security, with streets around the stadium cordoned off five hours before kickoff. Ecuadorian media have appealed to fans for good behaviour.

Chile's match away to Venezuela will be their first appearance in the World Cup since their team walked off the pitch at the Maracana Stadium in Rio De Janeiro during a qualifier against Brazil in 1989.

The Chileans, trailing 1-0, abandoned the game early in

the second half when a firecracker thrown from the crowd landed near goalkeeper Roberto Rojas, who collapsed in a heap and was taken off on a stretcher.

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, banned Chile from the 1994 qualifiers after judging that Rojas was playing. Rojas himself was banned for life.

Peru coach Juan Carlos Oblitas could become the first managerial victim of the qualifiers if his team follow their defeat against Ecuador with a bad result at home to Colombia.

Colombia, who beat Scotland 1-0 in a friendly on Wednesday in Miami, are almost certain to rely on old favourites such as Freddy Rincon, Carlos Valderrama,

Leon Alvarez and Faustino Asprilla.

Coach Hernan Dario Gomez's faith in the stalwarts appeared to be justified against Scotland.

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FRENCH OPEN

Pierce booted off; Kafelnikov, Krajicek advance

PARIS (AFP) — Mary Pierce was jeered off court by an uncompromising Roland Garros crowd here on Friday when she crashed out of the women's singles at the French Open — badly beaten in straight-sets 4-6, 2-6 by Germany's Barbara Rittner on an overcast centre-court.

The 12th-seeded Pierce, a finalist here two years ago and the 1995 Australian Open champion, was close to tears after failing to survive the first week of the world's supreme clay-court event. But she had only herself to blame for not taking her chances in the 73-minute match.

She squandered three break points in the fourth game of the second set a series of ugly, unforced errors and then double-faulted three times to go 1-4 behind.

"It's too hard to explain how I feel," said Pierce after her defeat. "Obviously I am very disappointed. I just wish I could go to bed tonight, wake up tomorrow and practice and then come back here and play another match in the tournament."

"There is always pressure on me when I play here. But I don't know why I lost today. I made too many errors. I didn't move well."

Asked about the hostile reaction of the crowd as she left court, Pierce, wearing the now-famous figure-revealing black tennis dress, shrugged: "There's nothing I can do about the public. They either cheer for you or they don't."

"For the last two months I have been feeling great and training well. And when I played her (Rittner) in Berlin

recently I won in straight-sets. So I was confident going out there today."

The Canadian-born French number-one was also booed off court the last time she played in Paris after being beaten in her first match at the Paris Indoor Open at the nearby Coubertin Stadium in February.

The 82nd-ranked French number-one was also booed off court the last time she played in Paris after being beaten in her first match at the Paris Indoor Open at the nearby Coubertin Stadium in February.

The 82nd-ranked Rittner, who had never previously beaten Pierce in four encounters and who copped a warning for time-wasting in the second-set, said: "If she's playing really well then the crowds go crazy with her. But they get disappointed when she misses easy shots. It is not very fair, perhaps, but that's how it is."

"Today it was very close at the start — but I could see she was getting nervous as the match wore on. The secret is to make her run and not let her dominate with her big serve."

Rittner now plays twice-champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario for a place in the quarter-finals.

The Spanish player, who has been keeping a low profile as she bids for a third singles title at Roland Garros, moved up a gear to overwhelm 20-year-old Elena Likhovtseva 6-0, 6-0 in just 52 minutes.

It was sweet revenge for Sanchez-Vicario who had lost in three sets to Likhovtseva in the quarter-finals in Berlin

— dropping the third set 0-6 and reach the last sixteen of the women's singles here on Friday. Sanchez-Vicario whose only clay-court tournament victory this year came in Hamburg, has so far dropped only six games since arriving in Paris and she is enjoying a relatively low-profile passage through the draw while media attention focusses on the returning Monica Seles and defending champion Steffi Graf.

In the men's singles, Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov continued his impressive march into the last sixteen by beating Felix Mantilla of Spain 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 in 1 hour 51 minutes — and then revealed that he had finally found the secret of how to play on the red clay surface.

"I am keeping that secret to myself," smiled the fair-haired.

There is still a long way to go. But I am feeling very good, very fit and confident and I am playing well."

Kafelnikov, a semi-finalist twelve months ago, now faces Spain's Francisco Clavet. Clavet, 27 and ranked 43, beat veteran French left-hander Guy Forget 6-3, 7-5, 6-3.

Meanwhile the men's 13th seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands came safely through his third-round match against Australia's Todd Woodbridge 7-5, 6-2, 6-2.

Pierce was the first seed to go out.

The tenth-seeded Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic beat Elena Makarova of Russia 6-1, 7-5 and 13th-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria surged past



Thomas Muster of Austria returns a forehand to Gerard Solves of France during their match in the French Open at Roland Garros (Reuters photo)

Miriam Oremans of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-1.

Edberg's farewell lasts longer than expected

Stefan Edberg has played 41 matches since his first appearance at the French Open in 1984. There is one that sticks with him the most.

In 1989, Edberg played in the final against Michael Chang, taking a two-sets-to-one lead before losing in five.

"That's the match I will remember," he said.

Edberg and Chang will meet again at the French Open, this time in the third round of the Sweden's 13th and final appearance at Roland Garros.

"It will be a tough match. I'm sure about that," said Edberg, who has won six Grand Slams but never the French. "He's improved tremendously since '89. If I play as well as I've done the last two matches, I feel at least I have a chance."

Edberg's farewell has lasted longer than many thought.

On Thursday, Edberg

breezed to a second-round victory against Spaniard Carlos Moya 6-2, 6-2, 6-1, defeating the only player who has beaten defending champion Thomas Muster on clay this year.

"It's one of those days where everything you do turns to gold," Edberg said. "The way that I felt, it was like I was 20 today."

While Edberg coasted Thursday, the fourth-seeded Chang struggled through a second round test against Richard Fromberg of Australia, winning 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

Edberg's serve-and-volley style — winning 36 points at the net Thursday — worked well in the warm, dry weather that makes the red clay of Roland Garros a faster surface.

"The chances are far greater under these conditions. I just have to pray for good weather," Edberg said.

On Friday, the French Open moved into the third round with top-seeded Pete Sampras meeting Fellow American Todd Martin. Seventh-seeded Jim Courier was matched with Karol

Kucera of Slovakia. Monica Seles, sharing the top seed with Steffi Graf, faced Sabine Appelmans of Belgium, who previously made it to the fourth round in the French Open.

Anke Huber of Germany, the sixth seed, was playing France's Arash Pitkowski, ranked 123rd.

On Thursday, defending champion Thomas Muster appeared fully recovered from the sprained ankle he suffered last week and had little trouble beating 17th-ranked Gerard Solves of France 6-1, 6-3, 6-0.

Graf, the defending women's champion, largely dominated in her 6-2, 6-3 victory over 54th-ranked Nicole Bradke of Australia, though she fought to maintain her lead early on in both sets and made 20 unforced errors.

The 11th-seeded Armand Boetsch became the fifth seeded man to fall when the Netherlands' Paul Haarhuis won 7-5, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 in a two-hour and 48-minute duel Thursday. All women's seeds have survived to the third round.

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S. Arabia executes four Riyadh bomb convicts

RIYADH (Agencies) — Four Saudi militants convicted of the deadly car bombing of a U.S.-run military facility in Riyadh Nov. 13 were beheaded Friday, the Interior Ministry said.

The men, all Saudi Arabians, were executed despite threats by underground extremists to attack U.S. interests in the kingdom if the four were punished.

Seven people, including five Americans, were killed in the Riyadh bombing of a training centre for the National Guard.

An Interior Ministry statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency said the four "criminals" were executed in Riyadh in line with Islamic law.

The ministry said it was determined to "safeguard the security and stability of the kingdom," warning that "it will not spare anyone who dares to undermine it."

The U.S. embassy in Riyadh received a threat of anti-American revenge attacks two weeks ago if the four Saudis were punished, but the Saudi Defence Ministry brushed them aside.

The blast at the Riyadh centre where U.S. army personnel trained the National Guard killed five Americans and two Indians and wounded up to 60 others.

It was claimed by three militant groups demanding the departure of U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh announced on April 22 the arrest of four

Saudi fundamentalists who confessed to the bombing on television but did not mention such a demand.

Interior Minister Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz said the "Islamic militant group" included three who had received military training in Afghanistan. They had smuggled the explosives into Saudi Arabia from Yemen, he said.

The four identified themselves as Abdul Aziz Fahd Al Moatham, Riyadh Suleiman Al Hajeir, Moshah Ali Al Shamrani, all 24 years old, and Khaled Ahmad Al Said, 30.

In their televised confession, they said they had decided to carry out an "anti-American attack" after having first considered kidnapping or murdering Saudi officials.

The confessed militants said they had been influenced by the ideas of several exiled Saudi Arab opposition leaders, including London-based Mohammed Al Massari. They also mentioned Osama Ben Laden, who financed Afghan fighters and who lives in Sudan or Afghanistan after losing his Saudi nationality, as well as Abi Mohammad Al Magdissi, another militant.

In Saudi Arabia those convicted of serious crimes such as murder, rape, armed robbery or drug trafficking are beheaded by sword in public squares, normally after Friday prayers and in front of large crowds.

In recent years those responsible for particularly horrific crimes have been crucified and displayed in public squares. The Interior Ministry statement did not say whether the four fundamentalists met the same fate.

Two weeks ago Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz brushed off the threat of revenge attacks if the executions went ahead.

"The Kingdom will not be influenced by any threat and will apply God's law against the four criminals," Prince Sultan said. "Such threats are child's play."

But the U.S. State Department warned its 35,000 citizens in Saudi Arabia of possible attacks following the arrest of the four militants.

The U.S. embassy has "received an anonymous telephone call threatening retaliation against Americans in Saudi Arabia if the four Saudis charged with the... bombing are punished," the State Department said.

The U.S. embassy in Riyadh, closed for Friday, could not be reached for comment following the executions.

An embassy hotline, on which Americans living in the kingdom can receive recorded security information, was not updated following the executions.

The hotline played a message recorded on May 15, which informed the up to 40,000 Americans living in the kingdom of the threats, and urged them to "exercise caution, keep a low profile and reduce travel within Saudi Arabia."

Kabariti ends visits to Tunisia and Algeria with focus on Arab solidarity, bilateral ties

TUNIS (Agencies) — Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali and the Jordanian prime minister, Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, on Friday reviewed bilateral relations and the latest developments in the region.

In a statement following the meeting, attended by Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Al Qarawi, Mr. Kabariti said President Ben Ali stressed Tunisia's support for Arab causes, including the Palestinian cause.

Mr. Kabariti also held a round of talks with his Tunisian counterpart on means of enhancing economic and political cooperation.

Also discussed was cooperation in tourism.

The two also discussed developments in regional and international arenas.

Mr. Kabariti, who later ended his two-day visit to Tunisia, described the meeting as fruitful and said that Jordanian and Tunisian views were identical.

Mr. Qarawi said the meeting was constructive, excellent and brotherly, and paid

tribute to Jordanian-Tunisian relations.

He called on Arabs to settle their differences and enhance inter-Arab relations.

Mr. Kabariti, who on Thursday concluded a two-day official visit to Algeria, voiced confidence that the Middle East peace process will continue regardless of the outcome of the Israeli elections.

In a statement to Reuters, Mr. Kabariti said: "We believe the peace process is a continuous process and I don't think it will be affected by one government or a trend."

"It might take some time before we know the reality of the new trend and methodology to be followed by the Israeli government" after Benjamin Netanyahu, the newly elected prime minister, forms his government, he said.

During his visit to Algeria, Mr. Kabariti met with Algerian President Eliaamine Zeroual and conveyed to him a message from His Majesty King Hussein and held talks with Algerian officials.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti returns home late Friday after visits to Algeria and Tunisia.

The Jordanian and Algerian sides signed agreements to establish a joint committee to cooperate in a media affairs.

The two sides also agreed to enhance relations through the exchange of official visits and delegations representing the health, higher education and commerce sectors.

The importance of continuing cooperation and coordination at all levels and voiced their support for efforts exerted to revive Arab solidarity and the peace process.

In statements prior to his departure from Algiers, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan had never failed to attend any Arab meeting because one of the priorities of the Jordanian policy was to extend bridges of cooperation and to work towards achieving Arab unity and solidarity.

He said that the state of Arab relations was below the desired standards. He stressed Jordan's support for any and all Arab meeting whether at the bilateral level or otherwise.

Mr. Kabariti described Jordanian-Palestinian relations as brotherly and growing stronger. Jordan is seeking to support the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in its negotiations with Israel, he said.

On relations with the Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan maintains good relations with these countries, particularly with Saudi Arabia and noted that a joint Jordanian-Saudi committee will meet in Amman in mid-June to revive agreements.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan welcomes any Arab leader to attend the tripartite summit — of King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat — which will be held in Jordan on June 5. The invitation is open for them to attend, he said.

Government engineers want 'fair' treatment

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It seems that a hot summer is awaiting Jordan's professional associations.

After a doctor's strike and a threat of nurses of an imminent strike, the "open general assembly" of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) on Thursday authorised the association's board to take any measure, including a sit-in or strike, to start a dialogue with the government on problems facing public sector engineers.

The general assembly gave

the board a one month to hold a meeting to brief on the outcome of contacts with the government.

Chairing Thursday's general assembly meeting, attended by a large number of engineers, JEA Vice-President Husni Abu Ghida reviewed the history of the "open general assembly" since 1992.

Mr. Abu Ghida said the consecutive boards of the association opened contacts with the government seeking a "fair" treatment of the nearly 5,000 engineers serving with the government.

Engineers present at the meeting called on the govern-

ment to be "fair" with them in granting them the allowances they deserve, saying their salaries and allowances had dramatically shrunk since 1988 when a unified allowances regulation was issued.

They offered more than 30 proposals to resolve problems facing them.

Mr. Abu Ghida said engineers working in several government departments were facing "arbitrary" problems. The association will list all these problems as requested by the engineers and send them to the government, he said.

Administrative Development Minister Kamal Nasser

on Wednesday visited the JEA premises and had a two-hour meeting with its board members.

Mr. Abu Ghida described the meeting as positive and said the minister discussed with the board members problems facing public sector employees.

"The minister promised not to issue a new unified allowances regulation except after sending its draft to the association," said Mr. Abu Ghida stressing that the association's present moves were not against any government but a continuation of moves started in 1992.

Publisher held with counterfeit remains in jail; probe continues

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nayef Tawara, publisher of the weekly tabloid Al Bilad, detained for possession of \$100,000 in forged American currency, has told investigators that a son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had lent him the counterfeit banknotes, according to a judicial source.

The judicial source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said police were acting upon a "tip off" when they arrested Mr. Tawara on Monday.

"He had been under surveillance since May 22 and police were waiting to arrest him with the money," said the source. He was intercepted while he was driving along a main road in north Amman late Monday.

A search of the vehicle, registered in his name, unveiled the forged currency in an envelope concealed under the seat, according to the source. Mr. Tawara was immediately arrested.

"Upon interrogation, Tawara told investigators that the money was handed over to him by an Iraqi named Jassem and that it came from Qusai Hussein," the second son of President Saddam, said the source. "He said he did not know why the money was sent to him."

"We are not buying the theory," the judicial source said, without further elaboration. The source also declined to say whether police knew in advance that the money was counterfeit or Mr. Tawara was aware that he was receiving forged banknotes.

Qusai Hussein, 29, heads Iraqi military intelligence and a dreaded security unit directly in charge of protecting senior Iraqi figures, including President Saddam himself.

Mr. Tawara's Al Bilad is a tabloid known for sensational reporting and fierce criticism of the government in office.

Another theory circulating in Amman, which the source would not confirm or deny, was that the money had come from Israel, which is known to be a major source for counterfeit American currency.

Israel is also known to have been the source of counterfeit Jordanian dinars on at least one occasion.

Recently, Al Bilad, saying it wanted to turn itself into a public limited company, placed its shares for public subscription. The status of the issue and the response it drew was not immediately known.

It was also not known whether Mr. Tawara would argue in court that the money was sent to him to buy shares in the proposed issue.

The London-based Al Hayat daily reported late last year that the Baghdad regime, prompted by a strain in ties with the Jordanian government, was trying to "recruit" Jordanian journalists through cash and gifts and that Amman had a list of 42, including a minister in the former government and businessmen who were on the Iraqi payroll.

According to the report, Baghdad was seeking to ensure the support of the Jordanian media in its standoff with the Kingdom after His Majesty King Hussein and senior Jordanian officials strongly criticised the policies of the Saddam regime.

Al Hayat was taken to court for the article, but the tribunal cleared the newspaper and its Amman correspondent of all charges.

Al Bilad has often run sensational stories on Iraq and on Iraqi-Jordanian relations as well as internal issues here in Jordan. Mr. Tawara himself and the chief editor and several reporters of Al Bilad have been taken to court several times for violating the Press and Publications Law.

Serbs resume 'ethnic cleansing' — U.N.

GENEVA (Agencies) — The U.N. refugee agency said Friday that Bosnian Serbs had relaunched "ethnic cleansing" and reinstituted a checkpoint that stopped a U.N. bus service.

"It feels like the bad old days," said Ron Redmond, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "We have some ugly new reports of what can only be described as ethnic cleansing."

Armed gangs of local and refugee Serbs had attacked and harassed Muslims, Croats and gypsies in the Teslic area of central Bosnia, about 60 kilometres west of Tuzla, Mr. Redmond said.

At least 100 people have fled their homes to seek refuge in territory controlled by the Muslim-Croat federation, he said.

"This represents the first major wave of harassment of minorities in Republika Srpska (the Serb republic) since Dayton," he said, referring to the Bosnian peace

accords signed last December.

The harassment ranges from telephone threats to personal attacks such as beatings and explosives being thrown into homes, Mr. Redmond said, adding that Serb police basically were turning a blind eye.

The attacks are concentrated in four villages around Teslic, he said, noting that the Muslim population in one village had dwindled from 114 last March to "a mere 28." About 1,700 Muslims remain in the Teslic area.

All Serb checkpoints, which during the Bosnian war often stopped UNHCR convoys from taking relief aid to Muslims, have been dismantled under the accords, which guarantee freedom of movement.

But Mr. Redmond said the Serb rechecked such a roadblock Thursday between Banja Luka and Zenica and stopped a UNHCR bus carrying Muslims across the boundary between the Serb territory

and the federation.

"Taken together these incidents painfully remind us of the sorts of obstacles and abuses that UNHCR had to face on the ground during nearly four years of war," he said, "all in this brings back some very bad memories."

Redmond said UNHCR has concluded that the Bosnian Serb leadership, including Gojko Kljickovic, appointed Bosnian Serb "prime minister" earlier in May by Radovan Karadzic, "is telling us one thing, but they're doing another thing on the ground."

Justice on hold

The United States and its allies are signalling that the cost of bringing Bosnian Serb leaders to justice for war crimes is — for the time being — simply too great.

Washington and others are making diplomatic efforts to have Mr. Karadzic removed from power. Mr. Karadzic and military commander Rat-

ko Mladic are both wanted on war crimes charges by the U.N. tribunal in the Hague.

But diplomats say that while Mr. Karadzic must be removed from power, there is a growing realisation that neither he nor General Mladic will be delivered for trial anything soon.

"The cost of getting them is just potentially too great," said one Western diplomat who asked not to be identified.

But putting the issue of justice to one side is also a risk, since Mr. Karadzic is seen as a major obstacle to the peace process, particularly ahead of the September elections in Bosnia.

Impunity is also potentially embarrassing for Western countries which set up the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal and called it a key element of reconciliation after the conflict.

Nevertheless, diplomats say it has become clear that

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Iraq concludes voting in first local elections

BAGHDAD (R) — More than nine million people voted on Friday, the second and last day of polling in Iraq's first local elections, state-run Baghdad Radio reported.

Nearly 5,000 council seats in Baghdad and 14 provinces will be decided by people voting in 1,464 polling stations. Names of winning candidates are to be announced on Saturday.

At Al Kindi polling station on the outskirts of the capital Baghdad one voter said: "I am here to choose by representatives in our council because when the council starts working I want to complain that some teachers do not teach well in the school where my children are enrolled."

According to a law issued last year these councils will have powers over education, health, tourism, housing and economic activities in their areas.

Official newspapers said on Friday that these councils would supervise the food rationing system launched by the government since the United Nations imposed trade sanctions on Iraq after its troops invaded Kuwait in 1990.

But it is not known whether the councils will have a hand in the distribution of food Iraq was allowed to import after signing last week an oil-for-food plan allowing Baghdad to export \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy urgent needs for its population.

Names and pictures of candidates were printed by newspapers before the start of the elections and the interior minister said "all candidates were given equal footing in their elections campaigns."

It was not known whether all candidates were from the ruling Baath Party or included some independents. No voting has taken place in the three northern provinces of Dahouk, Sulaimaniya and Erbil which are under Kurdish rebel control.

The elections were the third held by Iraq in the last eight months. In March Iraq held parliamentary elections in which all 160 candidates of the Baath Party won seats as well as 60 independents. Last October Iraq held presidential elections in which President Saddam Hussein was reinstated in power for seven more years.

'Well-defined' gaps remain in Iraq arms data, U.N. says

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. commission for Iraqi disarmament denied Baghdad's accusations Thursday that its inspectors were seeking "trivial" information, and said that Iraq must account for "well-defined gaps" in banned weaponry.

In an interview with AFP, U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) Deputy head Charles Duelfer reacted to comments by Iraqi General Hussam Mohammed Amin, who accused U.N. inspectors of raising "minor and trivial questions" on Iraq's past weapons programme in a bid to delay the lifting of sanctions.

Mr. Duelfer said that despite its assertions, Iraq had still not accounted for all its biological and chemical agents, munitions and elements of its missile programme.

"Iraq has offered varying explanations which change rather regularly," he added. Baghdad's latest "full, final and complete disclosure" submitted in a report earlier this month had been "analysed to fair extent, and we don't find it greatly improved, unfortunately," Mr. Duelfer said.

Under U.N. resolutions,

Iraq is banned from holding or developing biological and chemical weaponry and missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometres.

The U.N. oil embargo, which has been in force since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, is to remain in force until UNSCOM certifies that Iraq has dismantled its weapons of mass destruction and allows long-term monitoring.

Mr. Duelfer, a U.S. national, said that "we cannot tell the Security Council that they are dead and gone."

"Significant uncertainty" remained in all the main areas, notably concerning the time factor and the origin of documents, he said.

The U.N. inspectors continued to ask for details about past programmes because they could reflect current developments, but also "because they are convinced that Iraq has steadfastly refused to provide us with the information we need."

Mr. Duelfer explained that the United Nations, which own details of the supplies in the past, must possess a verifiable material before the sanctions lifted.

Charles, Diana seal school trip with kiss

Charles, Diana seal school trip with kiss

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana and her estranged husband Prince Charles, who are locked in acrimonious divorce talks, have sealed with a kiss a visit to their son's school. The polite but warm peck on the cheek — their first kiss in public for a year — produced a flurry of speculation in the royalty-obsessed tabloids with the Daily Mirror sighing in its long-running headline "If only..." But the Sun, Britain's best-selling newspaper, decided it was "the last kiss" before their divorce is finalised. It said the brief display of affection was put on to comfort their 13-year-old son Prince William. The couple arrived separately for Prince William's first open day at his exclusive private school, Eton, but they put on a united front with what the papers dubbed "the clinch of Wales." The kiss provoked debate about a possible thaw in the divorce negotiations between the heir to the throne and his wife. Both have admitted adultery amid bitter recriminations. But royal expert Ingrid Seward squashed any speculation about a last-minute reconciliation, telling BBC Television: "It is a social kiss. It means nothing. It was done for the sake of Prince William. He is finding the whole thing deeply traumatic."

Teen who nearly blinded tourist to wear eye patch

ORLANDO, Florida (R) — A Florida teenager who threw a chunk of concrete through a car windscreen and partially blinded a German tourist has been ordered to wear an eye patch during his one-year jail term to understand how blindness feels. Court officials said Orange County Circuit Judge Cynthia MacKinnon ordered Zakee Chambers, 15, to wear the patch to understand the plight of Andrea Hartmann. "I think it's important for you to understand what this lady has gone through and will continue to go through for the rest of her life," the judge told Chambers. Ms. Hartmann, 30, of Rodgau, Germany, was in a car with her husband and two friends when the concrete was hurled at the vehicle, smashing her face and slicing her eye. Police said the tourists were lost and were looking for their hotel. Ms. Hartmann recently received a glass left eye and is having trouble with her right eye as a result of the attack.

New French carrier will lack fighter planes

PARIS (R) — The future pride of the French Navy, the aircraft carrier Charles De Gaulle, will put to sea without its fighter planes because of budget cuts, according to parliamentary testimony. Lacking fighter protection, it's Super Etendard bombers will be restricted for the ship's first three years in service to attacking low-tech third world adversaries of the sort French forces have often faced in Africa, naval sources say. To fight an enemy with an air force, the Charles De Gaulle would have to team up with an allied carrier able to provide fighter escorts, the sources said. Defence committee spokesman Arthur Paecht told parliament Thursday the nuclear-powered carrier would enter service in 1999 but receive its first Rafale fighters in 2002. The delay in supplying Rafales to the navy results from cost-cutting reform of the armed forces now underway.